

SEEKING LEVERAGE:
CHINA-RUSSIA RELATIONS IN WORLD POLITICS, 1991-2016

by

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Abstract

In the post-Soviet period, U.S. policymakers have viewed China and Russia as the two great powers with the greatest inclination and capacity to challenge the international order. The two countries would pose especially significant challenges to the United States if they were to act in concert. In addition to this clear policy relevance, the China-Russia relationship poses a number of problems for international relations theory.

During this period, China and Russia declined to form an alliance against the United States, as balance-of-power theory might have predicted. Over time, however, the two countries engaged in increasingly close cooperation to constrain U.S. power. These efforts fell short of traditional hard balancing, but they still held important implications for international politics. The actual forms of cooperation were therefore worthy of analysis using concepts from international relations theory, a task that this dissertation attempts. An additional problem concerned Russia's response to China's rise. Given the potential threat that it faced, Russia might have been expected to improve relations with the West as a hedge against China's growing power. Instead, Russia increased its level of diplomatic cooperation with China as its relations with the West deteriorated.

This dissertation addresses these problems through a detailed empirical study of the evolution of China-Russia relations from 1991 to 2016, using the within-case method of process tracing. The dissertation uses a modified neoclassical realist framework, which views the structure of the international system as the independent variable and domestic factors as intervening variables. At the level of the international system, unipolarity gave China and Russia incentives to cooperate in order to restrain U.S. power but also limited their ability to balance against U.S. power effectively. Eventually, as both countries' positions of relative power improved, they sought spheres of influence in their own regions, gaining some room for maneuver from strong relations

with the other. At the domestic level, a convergence of national identities played a crucial role. The two countries' shared antipathy toward the concept of a Western-led liberal international order laid the groundwork for a durable relationship, albeit one increasingly tilted in China's favor.

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Introduction

For much of the period since the breakup of the Soviet Union, U.S. policymakers have viewed China and Russia as the two great powers with the greatest inclination and capacity to challenge the international order that emerged in the wake of the Cold War. The two countries were on different trajectories. China was emerging as a potential peer competitor to the United States, while a weakened Russia sought to recover its great-power status. Both countries resisted U.S. efforts to spread democracy and liberal norms throughout the world. Individually, both countries increasingly challenged U.S. interests in their respective regions. In combination, they could pose the most serious potential challenge to U.S. global leadership.

No such combination emerged, as China and Russia refrained from forming an alliance throughout this period. By the middle of the second decade of the twenty-first century, however, U.S. relations with both countries were increasingly fraught. The broad outlines of a potential great-power clash between the United States and a rising China grew increasingly apparent each year. Against this backdrop, a series of maritime disputes between China and its neighbors, including U.S. allies, threatened regional stability in Asia. U.S.-Russia relations, meanwhile, suffered greatly from the Ukraine crisis, plunging to their lowest level since the end of the Cold War. Under these circumstances, the possibility of an anti-Western, China-Russia geopolitical alignment, or even potentially an alliance, reemerged with new urgency.

The China-Russia relationship not only presents policy challenges for world leaders, but also holds intriguing implications for international relations theory. Most studies of China-Russia relations focus on policy implications, making little or no reference to theory. International relations theorists frequently draw upon this relationship for examples and insights but rarely make detailed empirical study of it. Both approaches have value, but an approach combining theory and

policy could also prove fruitful. Insights from theory may help to explain various aspects of this relationship. The empirical study of China-Russia relations, in turn, may help to inform theory. This study attempts both tasks, focusing on the period from the breakup of the Soviet Union in late 1991 to the end of 2016.

In an effort to explain the evolution of China-Russia relations during this period, this study borrows a general framework from the school of foreign policy analysis known as neoclassical realism. In this approach, the structure of the international system is the main independent variable, domestic factors are intervening variables, and foreign policy decisions are the dependent variable. Neoclassical realism is a paradigm for studying foreign policy decisions rather than a theory. It therefore offers some flexibility in application. While employing a neoclassical realist framework, this study makes some important modifications to the framework compared to the way in which previous studies have employed it.

In its conception of systemic factors, this study looks beyond the relatively static view of structure inherent in structural realism. It considers the impact of changes in relative power, which are crucial for understanding the relationship's evolution during this period. When considering domestic factors, this study focuses on the important role of national identity in conditioning states' responses to systemic influences. In contrast with pure constructivist approaches, which discount the importance of the structure of the international system, this study conceives of national identity as an intervening variable that mediates structural effects in shaping foreign policy outcomes. Both domestic factors and interactions with other states drive the formation of national identity. The resulting national identity, in turn, shapes the state's reaction to the incentives and constraints that the structure of the international system imposes.

Following the breakup of the Soviet Union, the new unipolar structure of the international system imposed significant incentives and constraints upon China and Russia. The leaderships of both countries eventually decided that they should cultivate relations with the other in order to provide at least a partial counterweight to U.S. power. At the same time, the United States enjoyed such a preponderance of power that even a potential alliance between China and Russia would have been incapable of balancing U.S. power effectively. The structure of the international system therefore set broad parameters for the China-Russia relationship, encouraging leaders in both countries to pursue cooperation with the other, but to limit the extent of such cooperation in order to avoid provoking a major confrontation with the United States and its allies.

Although these broad parameters remained constant throughout the period under study, changes in relative power were crucial. These changes help to explain fluctuations in both countries' relations with the United States, which in turn produced changes in China-Russia relations. The changing balance of power between China and Russia, which tilted sharply in China's favor, also affected the China-Russia relationship directly, though not as much as might have been expected. China and Russia set aside their own potentially diverging interests in order to focus on their shared antipathy to U.S. dominance. In general, as both countries' relative power grew, they asserted their interests with growing confidence, especially in their own regions. To a considerable degree, however, the manner in which they asserted themselves was a result of domestic factors in both countries, particularly the formation of national identity. The two countries' convergent national identities caused them to increase their bilateral coordination more than purely structural factors would have dictated.

At the international level, China and Russia sought to establish the ideological groundwork for their national aspirations. As democracy faltered in Russia, the two countries increasingly

shared a distaste for Western democracy promotion and human rights advocacy. Both countries feared that the United States posed a threat to their governing regimes. Rather than viewing the United States as a threat to their national security, the leadership in both countries viewed U.S. and Western influence primarily as a threat to their regimes' stability. The ruling Chinese Communist Party viewed the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the breakup of the Soviet Union as a stark lesson in the risks of democratic political reform. Chinese leaders feared that Western influence could drive similar "peaceful evolution" in China. Russian President Vladimir Putin drew similar conclusions, viewing the breakup of the Soviet Union as the "greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the twentieth century." Both countries viewed the "color revolutions" and the Arab Spring warily, fearing that similar upheaval eventually could threaten their own governing regimes. In a series of joint declarations throughout this period, therefore, China and Russia affirmed their support for the principle of state sovereignty and the right of states to pursue their own development paths. In practice, they believed that such prerogatives belonged to great powers, including themselves, and not necessarily to weaker states.

China and Russia also found common ground in their advocacy of multipolarity. The two countries asserted repeatedly that a multipolar world was in the process of formation. Moreover, they argued that this trend was positive and would contribute to global stability. Their conception of multipolarity, however, reflected their own national identities. As became increasingly clear over time, their view of multipolarity envisioned a world in which they, as great powers, would establish spheres of influence in their own regions. The concept of spheres of influence was incompatible with notions of a liberal international order. China and Russia also made clear their intention to exert growing influence on the international stage as circumstances permitted. As their relative power grew, both countries took steps to establish their own regional spheres of influence

through the tactic of probing. Both countries mounted calibrated challenges to neighboring countries, designed to test U.S. power and commitment at a low level, without risking a forceful U.S. response. Neither country fully supported the other's regional ambitions, nor did either country wish to be drawn into potential conflicts in the other's region. Their close bilateral relationship, however, ensured that both countries enjoyed a stable "strategic rear" and had no reason to fear that the other would join the West in seeking to thwart its regional ambitions. Although neither country wished to see the other become embroiled in a deep crisis in relations with the United States and its allies, both perceived that a modicum of tension in the other's relations with the West could offer some strategic room for maneuver.

The convergence of national identities also conditioned the way that both countries viewed their strategic options. For China, cultivating relations with Russia, a country with which it shared common views on many international issues, was a means of avoiding diplomatic isolation during the period of its anticipated rise to superpower status. National identity was especially important in Russia's consideration of its strategic options. With China's advantage in relative power over Russia growing rapidly, Russia might have been tempted to improve relations with the West in order to strengthen its position in the face of China's rise. Instead, Russia moved steadily closer to China strategically, calculating that its disagreements with the West were its most pressing concerns for the moment. The Russian leadership eventually viewed China as a kindred spirit in its rejection of U.S. dominance and liberal values. Russia, especially under Putin, calculated that it could improve relations with China in order to strengthen its own bargaining position in its difficult relations with the West, while leaving concerns about China's rise for the future. Eventually, the rise of China could force Russia to reconsider this policy. As the second decade of the twenty-first century neared its end, however, Russia's policy showed no signs of reversal.

Chapter 1

International Relations Theory and China-Russia Relations

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. First, it serves as a kind of literature review of international relations theory's possible applications to China-Russia relations during the post-Soviet period. Second, in drawing upon this body of theory, it attempts to build a theoretical framework for the present study that is based on neoclassical realism. Before delving into the theory, a brief discussion of methods is in order.

Methods

A study of China-Russia relations during this period poses several methodological challenges. It is, by necessity, a single case study, with all of the well-known methodological problems associated with this approach.¹ A single case study might be subject to selection bias, it might be insufficient for testing alternative explanations, it might yield an erroneous result because of measurement error, or it might be unable to capture the effects of randomness.² The over-generalization of results is another potential pitfall.³ In many instances, researchers gain interest in a theoretical question, formulate hypotheses and theories, and then select appropriate case studies for purposes of testing. This study follows the opposite approach. Inspired by a longstanding interest in China-Russia relations, it draws upon the literature in international

¹ Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 208-212.

² Ibid, 117, 210-211.

³ Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005), 80.

relations theory for concepts and theoretical approaches that might prove useful in explaining the evolution of the relationship during this period.

This study makes no claim to broader generalization beyond the case at hand. Indeed, it is not clear which other “cases” would fit into the same category as China-Russia relations during this period. This study could provide useful material for a future study of the dynamics of unipolar international systems, but such systems have been rare historically. During the period of U.S. primacy and unipolarity that followed the end of the Cold War, China and Russia were in a class by themselves as dissatisfied great powers. Other dissatisfied powers, including Iran, Iraq, and North Korea, were significantly less powerful than China and Russia. Other countries with the potential to gain great-power status, including India and Brazil, did not match China and Russia, their partners in the original BRIC grouping, in the level of their dissatisfaction with the existing international order. The unfolding of China-Russia relations in the coming years could also yield theoretical insights. For example, it could demonstrate how a rising state such as China might seek to cooperate with another dissatisfied state such as Russia, or the way in which a dissatisfied state such as Russia might seek to balance its opposition to an established superpower, on the one hand, with its concerns about a potentially threatening power such as China, on the other. However, these processes are in their early stages and await further developments before firm conclusions are possible.

Rather than seeking broad generalization, therefore, this study attempts a detailed description and explanation of the evolution of China-Russia relations during the period under study. In the terminology used in the literature on social science research methods, the study aims, at a minimum, to meet the standards of “atheoretical/configurative idiographic” case studies, which offer descriptive accounts that are available for use in later theory building. The more

ambitious aim is to conduct a “disciplined configurative” case study using established theories to explain a case.⁴ This study seeks to mitigate the problems with the single-case design by maximizing the number of observations within the single case. It therefore employs the within-case method of process-tracing. The goal is to examine the process of change in China-Russia relations in order to identify turning points and to analyze the causal role that different variables played at various stages.⁵ This approach entails an analysis of how changes in U.S.-China relations and U.S.-Russia relations affected relations between China and Russia. In general, the dependent variable is the extent of China-Russia cooperation at the global level to resist U.S. foreign policy, though the study also examines other facets of the two countries’ relationship at the global, regional, and bilateral levels. The study considers several independent variables that potentially affect the relationship, including both systemic and domestic factors.

This approach inevitably encounters the problem that Kenneth Waltz raised when he drew a distinction between theories of international politics and theories of foreign policy.⁶ Waltz stressed that he formulated his structural realist theory, commonly known as neorealism, to explain patterns in outcomes at the level of the international system, not to predict the foreign policy decisions of particular states.⁷ Several systemic theories, including Waltz’s own, yield insights that are useful in analyzing China-Russia relations during this period. In particular, they help to explain

⁴ Arend Lijphart, “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method,” *American Political Science Review* 65, no. 3 (September 1971): 682-693; and Harry Eckstein, “Case Studies and Theory in Political Science,” in *Handbook of Political Science*, Vol. 7, edited by Fred Greenstein and Nelson Polsby (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1975), 79-138. Cited in George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, 205-232.

⁵ For a discussion of process-tracing, see George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, 205-232.

⁶ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1979), 39, 48-49, 58-59, 72, 78, 87, 121-123; Kenneth N. Waltz, “Reflections on *Theory of International Politics*: A Response to My Critics,” in Robert O. Keohane, ed., *Neorealism and Its Critics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 328, 339-340, 343.

⁷ For a debate on this issue, see Colin Elman, “Horses for Courses: Why *Not* Theories of Foreign Policy?” *Security Studies* 6, no. 1 (Autumn 1996): 7-53; Kenneth N. Waltz, “International Politics Is Not Foreign Policy,” *Security Studies* 6:1 (Autumn 1996): 54-57; and Colin Elman, “Cause, Effect, and Consistency: A Response to Kenneth Waltz,” *Security Studies* 6, no. 1 (Autumn 1996): 58-61.

the constraints that the international environment imposed on these two countries. However, for a full analysis of the foreign policy decisions that have shaped China-Russia relations, it is necessary to analyze factors from all three of Waltz's "images," namely the levels of the individual, the state, and the international system.⁸ Although this study addresses the first image, noting some adjustments in foreign policy resulting from changes in the two countries' leadership, the focus is primarily on the second and third images. The second-image analysis focuses on domestic politics, state preferences, and national identities. The third-image analysis distinguishes between static theories that focus on established international systems and dynamic theories that address the transformation of international systems. The analysis in this chapter begins with structural effects and then considers domestic factors.

Structural Factors

When considering the effects of structural factors on China-Russia relations since the breakup of the Soviet Union, both static and dynamic structural theories are potentially useful. Among static theories, Kenneth Waltz's neorealist theory is the archetype. Static theories focus on a given structure of the international system, analyze the nature of that system, and largely refrain from addressing the issue of how that system might change. These theories focus on the relative stability of various power configurations, as well as dynamics within them, including the likelihood that a stable balance of power will form. In the period under study, unipolarity was the defining characteristic of the structure of the international system. Dynamic theories, by contrast, focus on change in the international system, including both change within an existing structure and

⁸ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959).

change from one structure to another.⁹ These theories pay special attention to the question of whether such change is likely to occur peacefully or through major war. According to several of these theories, differential rates of growth in power among leading states are a crucial driver of change in the international system. Some of these theories focus on potential clashes between the leading state in the system and a single challenger, devoting little attention to other powerful states in the system or to the operation of the balance of power.

Static theories are useful in analyzing contemporary China-Russia relations because the structure of the international system, arguably, remained unchanged for the entirety of the period under study. Unipolarity was the defining characteristic of the international system during this period. The breakup of the Soviet Union resulted in the demise of the bipolar order of the Cold War, yielding a new unipolar order with the United States as the sole superpower. Unipolarity imposed constraints on the foreign policy options of China and Russia that were relatively constant throughout this period. For example, the preponderance of U.S. power exerted pressure on China and Russia to strengthen their own relationship as a partial counterbalance, but also precluded the possibility of forming an alliance with the capability to balance effectively against the United States. Static theories focusing on unipolarity, therefore, primarily draw attention to the issue of U.S. primacy and the way that other states respond to it.

To be sure, the view that the international system remained unipolar throughout the period under study is controversial. Even before the financial crisis erupted in 2008, various analysts argued that the period of U.S. dominance was ending.¹⁰ The financial crisis heightened the perception in some quarters that unipolarity was yielding to a new international order. Soon after the outbreak of the crisis, the U.S. National Intelligence Council forecast the emergence of a

⁹ Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 39-43.

¹⁰ See for example Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2008).

multipolar world by 2025.¹¹ Some analysts predicted that unipolarity would give way to a new international order with no clear leader, or perhaps to eventual Chinese domination.¹² More recent events, including Britain's withdrawal from the European Union, the election of Donald Trump as president of the United States, and a seeming decline in Western support for globalization and a liberal international order, led a former vice foreign minister of China to declare that the "American century" and the era of unipolarity had ended.¹³ International relations theorists who previously stressed the significance and durability of unipolarity conceded that the concept failed to capture important dynamics of international politics in view of China's emergence as an emerging potential superpower. Nevertheless, they argued that the world remained unipolar because the United States continued to enjoy a wide margin of superiority over China in economic, military, and technological measures of power.¹⁴

This study accepts the argument that the international system remained unipolar throughout the period 1991-2016. An exclusive focus on a static conception of unipolarity, however, would miss important dynamics of international politics. Although unipolarity imposed important constraints, changes in relative power were a crucial driver of the strategies that China and Russia pursued during this period. This factor shaped the evolution of both countries' relations with the

¹¹ National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2008).

¹² For the view that the emerging international order would lack a power or group of powers that would be willing and able to exercise global leadership, see Charles A. Kupchan, *No One's World: The West, the Rising Rest, and the Coming Global Turn* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). For the view that China would soon enjoy global dominance, see Martin Jacques, *When China Rules the World: The End of the Western World and the Birth of a New Global Order* (London: Penguin, 2009).

¹³ 何亚非: 《“后美国时代”来临是历史必然》, 《环球时报》, 2017年8月15日 [He Yafei, "The Approach of the 'Post-American Era' is Historically Inevitable," *Huanqiu Shibao*, Aug. 15, 2017]; He Yafei, "The 'American century' has come to its end," *Global Times*, Aug. 20, 2017.

¹⁴ Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, "The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers in the Twenty-first Century: China's Rise and the Fate of America's Global Position," *International Security* 40, no. 3 (Winter 2015/16): 7-53. For an argument that the United States is likely to maintain its advantage over China for a long period, see Michael Beckley, "China's Century? Why America's Edge Will Endure," *International Security* 36, no. 3 (Winter 2011/12): 41-78.

United States, as well as their relations with each other. In order to assess China-Russia relations during this period, therefore, analysts should also consider insights from dynamic theories of structural change in the international system.

Structural realism: Unipolarity, U.S. primacy, and China-Russia relations

The structural realist theory that Kenneth Waltz set forth in his 1979 book *Theory of International Politics*, which became known as neorealism, provides a natural starting point for a discussion of structural effects.¹⁵ Waltz defined the structure of the international system according to its ordering principles, most importantly anarchy and polarity. Anarchy, the system's essential feature, creates a self-help security system and forces states to engage in power politics to ensure their own security. As long as the system is anarchic and the existing states wish to survive, then two outcomes at the level of the system will recur: states will emulate the successful practices of other states, and balances of power will form. Waltz explained the logic that would compel states to balance: "Secondary states, if they are free to choose, flock to the weaker side; for it is the stronger state that threatens them. On the weaker side, they are both more appreciated and safer, provided, of course, that the coalition they join achieves enough defensive or deterrent strength to dissuade adversaries from attacking."¹⁶

As mentioned above, Waltz emphasized that he was proposing a theory of international politics, not a theory of foreign policy. He intended to explain and predict outcomes at the level of the international system, not the behavior of particular states. According to one typology, the form of balancing that Waltz describes was automatic balancing, as opposed to manual or dyadic

¹⁵ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979).

¹⁶ Ibid, 127.

balancing. In automatic balancing, the system tends toward balance regardless of whether states consciously seek that outcome. Manual balancing occurs when states act intentionally to create equilibrium in the system. Dyadic balancing describes balancing actions that states take because they seek to resist threats posed by other states, not because they consciously seek the formation of a stable international balance of power.¹⁷ If China and Russia were to form an alliance against the United States, this would be an example of dyadic balancing, which is outside the scope of Waltz's theory.

Theory of International Politics also analyzed the effects of polarity. However, Waltz's analysis focused on multipolarity and bipolarity, not unipolarity. After the end of the Cold War, Waltz argued that his theory retained its explanatory value in the new unipolar era.¹⁸ Waltz had argued previously that bipolarity was more stable than multipolarity. He now asserted that unipolarity was the least stable structure of all, both because the most powerful state tends to overstretch itself and because other states worry about the leader's power no matter how it behaves. Other states, fearing the heavy concentration of power in one state, eventually engage in power balancing. The theory predicted what would happen, but not when. Waltz insisted, however, that balancing tendencies were already apparent.¹⁹ Although he made no specific prediction that China and Russia would join forces to balance against the United States, he asserted that the United States, by expanding NATO and criticizing China and Russia for human rights abuses, had pushed the two countries closer together.²⁰ In the end, unipolarity would prove short-lived and a new balance

¹⁷ Colin Elman, "Introduction: Appraising Balance of Power Theory," in *Realism and the Balancing of Power: A New Debate*, ed. John A. Vasquez and Colin Elman (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003), 10-11.

¹⁸ Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Emerging Structure of the International System," *International Security* 18, no. 2 (1993): 44-79; Kenneth N. Waltz, "Structural Realism after the Cold War," *International Security* 25, no. 1 (2000): 5-41; Kenneth N. Waltz, "Structural Realism after the Cold War," in G. John Ikenberry, *America Unrivaled: The Future of the Balance of Power* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2002), 29-67.

¹⁹ Waltz, "Structural Realism after the Cold War," 27-28.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 38.

of power would form over time. “Those who refer to the unipolar moment are right,” Waltz wrote. “In our perspective, the new balance is emerging slowly; in historical perspectives, it will come in the blink of an eye.”²¹ Other analysts made similar predictions.²²

During the quarter-century that followed the breakup of the Soviet Union, however, the type of anti-American political and military combinations that balance-of-power theory might have predicted were absent. Nor did any such coalitions appear to be in the early stages of formation.²³ The two main indicators of balancing, namely substantial increases in defense spending that could change the global balance of power, or the formation of new alliances, were both absent. To the case at hand, China, Russia, and other major powers such as India did not seek to join with each other, or with other countries such as France and Germany, to balance U.S. power. True balancing of this sort would have entailed serious disruptions in relations with the United States. Despite frictions in their relations with the United States, neither China nor Russia allowed this relationship to deteriorate to such an extent.²⁴

A competing theoretical viewpoint, also based on structural realism, reached conclusions about the nature of unipolarity and U.S. primacy that were starkly different from those of Waltz. William C. Wohlforth, drawing upon hegemonic stability theory, argued that unipolarity would be both peaceful and durable. He wrote that the United States, in the aftermath of the Soviet Union’s demise, held a concentration of power that was unprecedented in world history.²⁵ The United States

²¹ Ibid, 30.

²² Christopher Layne, “The Unipolar Illusion: Why New Great Powers Will Arise,” *International Security* 17, no. 4 (Spring 1993): 5-51; Christopher Layne, “The Unipolar Illusion Revisited: The Coming End of the United States’ Unipolar Moment,” *International Security* 31, no. 2 (Fall 2006): 7-41.

²³ Michael Mandelbaum, *The Case for Goliath: How America Acts as the World’s Government in the 21st Century* (New York: Public Affairs, 2005), 159.

²⁴ Robert J. Lieber, *The American Era: Power and Strategy for the 21st Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 200-201.

²⁵ William C. Wohlforth, “The Stability of a Unipolar World,” *International Security* 24, no. 1 (Summer 1999): 5-41.

was the first leading state in modern international history that was dominant in all aspects of power: economic, military, technological, and geopolitical.²⁶ Because of its global preeminence, the United States did not face two problems that had plagued international leaders throughout history: hegemonic rivalry and balance-of-power politics among the major powers. The United States did not face the possibility of hegemonic rivalry because no contender for superpower status was likely to take actions that would invite the “focused enmity” of the United States.²⁷ In Wohlforth’s view, the rise of China was a distant prospect, perhaps at least three decades away at the time that he published his seminal article on unipolarity in 1999.²⁸ For the same reason, power balancing was also unlikely to occur. Other states were more likely to bandwagon with the United States, or at least seek to avoid its focused enmity, than to balance against it.²⁹

Other great powers, including China and Russia, lacked the advantages that the United States enjoyed. If they were to attempt to balance U.S. power through military buildups and alliances, they would spark counterbalancing actions by other countries in their regions before they could mount an effective challenge to U.S. primacy.³⁰ In a unipolar system, Wohlforth argued, any states that attempted to balance against the United States would quickly realize that their efforts were futile. This is precisely what occurred, he argued, when China and Russia made tentative efforts to balance against the United States. Former Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov’s “multilateral diplomacy” of the late 1990s, including efforts to construct a bloc of Russia, China, and India to resist U.S. foreign policy, made little headway. Russia’s economic weakness, in turn,

²⁶ Ibid, 7; Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, “American Primacy in Perspective,” *Foreign Affairs* 81, no. 4 (July/August 2002): 23.

²⁷ Wohlforth, “The Stability of a Unipolar World,” 26.

²⁸ Ibid, 33.

²⁹ Ibid, 25.

³⁰ Ibid, 8; G. John Ikenberry, “Strategic Reactions to American Preeminence: Great Power Politics in the Age of Unipolarity,” Report to National Intelligence Council, July 28, 2003.

made the country an ineffective partner for China in the attempt to build a counterweight to the United States.³¹

Waltz and Wohlforth offered contrasting assessments of the nature of unipolarity, but both used structural realist theory to underpin their arguments. Stephen Walt's balance-of-threat theory, which incorporates factors outside of the structural level, offers a competing realist explanation for the lack of balancing in the unipolar order. In a refinement of Waltz's theory, Walt argued that states balance not against power itself, but against power that they perceive as threatening. Four variables shape threat perceptions: aggregate power, geographical proximity, offensive capabilities, and offensive intentions.³² Walt introduced his balance-of-threat theory prior to the demise of bipolarity, but he later argued that the theory explained the lack of balancing against the United States in the new unipolar era. Wohlforth's analysis of unipolarity contained important insights, Walt argued, but balance-of-threat theory subsumed it and offered a more complete explanation for the lack of balancing.³³ For a full explanation, Walt argued, analysts should look beyond power and consider threat perceptions as well.

Regarding aggregate power, Walt's first variable, Walt conceded Wohlforth's point that the U.S. advantage in power made it dangerous for other states to contemplate open opposition to the United States. In this sense, Walt's balance-of-threat theory and the theory of hegemonic stability that underpins Wohlforth's argument were in accord. Nevertheless, Walt argued, other states retained the ability to employ a wide range of strategies aiming to complicate the exercise

³¹ Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," 36.

³² Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987), 21-28.

³³ Stephen M. Walt, "Keeping the World 'Off Balance': Self Restraint and U.S. Foreign Policy," in *America Unrivaled: The Future of the Balance of Power*, ed. G. John Ikenberry (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), 134.

of U.S. power in various ways. The extent to which they employ these strategies, he argued, depends on their perception of threat.³⁴

In Walt's analysis, a consideration of the other three variables offers a more complete understanding of the lack of balancing by China and Russia against the United States. For China and Russia, geography discourages balancing. Because the United States is geographically distant from both countries, the heavy concentration of power that it possesses is less threatening than it would be if its physical location were closer to China and Russia. The location of China and Russia on the Eurasian landmass, meanwhile, ensures that neighboring countries perceive their power as a threat. Geography therefore helps to explain why an alliance including China, Russia, and India is unlikely. With respect to offensive capabilities, Walt argued that China and Russia strongly resisted the U.S. establishment of missile defense systems because these countries perceived such systems as increasing U.S. offensive military power. Such views increased the likelihood that China and Russia would balance against the United States.³⁵ As for offensive intentions, other states worried that the United States would take actions that harmed their interests, but they recognized that the United States had no intention of invading or conquering them. Walt wrote that the United States posed no threat to the vital interests of other states, though he added that China and Russia might be partial exceptions to this rule.³⁶ Wang Jisi, a prominent Chinese analyst, agreed with Walt's balance-of-threat logic, arguing that China could accept the United States' status as a hegemon as long as U.S. foreign policy refrained from "hegemonistic" actions that threatened China and other countries.³⁷

³⁴ Ibid, 128.

³⁵ Ibid, 137-138.

³⁶ Ibid, 139, 139 fn45.

³⁷ 王缉思：《美国霸权的逻辑》，《美国研究》，2003年第3期，第7-30页 [Wang Jisi, "The Logic of American Hegemony," *Meiguo Yanjiu* 2003 (3): 7-30].

Either condition described above, namely an inability by China and Russia to balance the United States, or a disinclination on their part to balance because they perceived no threat of aggression by the United States, would be sufficient to explain the failure to balance. In practice, both conditions held. During the period since 1991, China and Russia have not possessed sufficient aggregate capability to balance the United States by forming an alliance. Even if they could form an alliance, the inherent difficulties of alliance politics, compounded by historical memory of previous tensions and awareness of competing interests at present, would hinder the effective functioning of such an alliance. At the same time, China and Russia have not perceived a direct threat to their security from the United States. If either country had perceived such a threat, undoubtedly it would have taken measures to defend itself, if necessary by relying on nuclear deterrence. Because such a situation did not arise during this period, the question of how much support China or Russia would have provided to the other in such circumstances must remain a hypothetical one. At a minimum, no treaty obligation bound them to guarantee the other's security.

On those occasions during the period under study when China and Russia engaged in cooperation to oppose the United States, they refrained from traditional power balancing, which would have been futile and detrimental to their interests. Nor was their cooperation driven by fear of invasion, given that neither country perceived such a risk. Rather, they cooperated in order to improve their bargaining position and to obtain more favorable outcomes in the international system. Behind their frequent calls for the establishment of a multipolar world lay the recognition that only long-term national development, rather than short-term foreign policy, could bring such a world into being.

Additional factors contributed to the calculation that the costs for China and Russia of balancing against the United States would exceed the likely benefits. Building counter-hegemonic

alliances is a difficult task. Allies are inefficient at aggregating power. Members of alliances are tempted to free ride, pass the buck, or bandwagon with the hegemon.³⁸ Members of an alliance must constantly be concerned about the two main risks of alliance politics, namely abandonment and entrapment. That is, they must worry about allies either failing to come to their aid when needed or drawing them into unwanted conflicts.³⁹ Both concerns would be acute in the case of China and Russia, both of which would be reluctant to be drawn into the other's regional conflicts.⁴⁰ Although coalitions of balancers have prevented potential hegemonies from arising in several historical cases, no precedent exists for a group of subordinate powers joining to topple an already existing hegemon.⁴¹

In addition to these factors, economic interdependence provided a strong incentive for both countries to minimize confrontation with the United States and other Western countries. China's economic growth, and consequently its rise to power, depended on its tight integration in the world economy, including rapidly growing economic ties with the United States and the European Union. Russia's economic ties with the United States were modest, but those with the EU were crucial to its modernization and the recovery of its great-power status.

Some scholars, observing the absence of traditional power balancing, sought to fill the void by employing the concept of "soft balancing."⁴² In contrast to hard balancing, in which states form

³⁸ Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," 29.

³⁹ Michael Mandelbaum, *The Nuclear Question: The United States and Nuclear Weapons, 1946-1976* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 151-52; Glenn H. Snyder, *Alliance Politics* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997), 187-88; Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," 29.

⁴⁰ 赵华胜:《中俄结盟》为何缺乏现实可行性》,《人民论坛》,2013年7月24日 [Zhao Huasheng, "Why a 'China-Russia Alliance' Lacks Realistic Feasibility," *Renmin Luntan*, July 24, 2013], <http://www.rmlt.com.cn/2013/0724/91927.shtml>

⁴¹ Brooks and Wohlforth, "American Primacy in Perspective," 25.

⁴² Robert A. Pape, "Soft Balancing Against the United States," *International Security* 30, no. 1 (2005): 7-45; T.V. Paul, "Soft Balancing in the Age of U.S. Primacy," *International Security* 30, no. 1 (2005): 46-71; Stephen M. Walt, *Taming American Power: The Global Response to U.S. Primacy* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005); Stephen M. Walt, "Alliances in a Unipolar World," *World Politics* 61:1 (2009), 103-106; Kai He and Huiyun Feng, "If Not Soft Balancing, Then What? Reconsidering Soft Balancing and U.S. Policy Toward China," *Security Studies* 17 (2008): 363-395.

alliances to check the political and military power of the dominant state, soft balancing does not signify an effort to change the overall distribution of capabilities. Instead, states use soft balancing in an effort to obtain more favorable outcomes within the existing balance of power than would be possible otherwise. In Walt's definition, soft balancing against the United States is "the conscious coordination of diplomatic action in order to obtain outcomes contrary to U.S. preferences—outcomes that could not be gained if the balancers did not give each other some degree of mutual support."⁴³ Robert Pape defines soft balancing as "actions that do not directly challenge U.S. military preponderance but that use nonmilitary tools to delay, frustrate, and undermine aggressive unilateral U.S. military policies."⁴⁴

The notion of soft balancing, however, seems to be a clear example of what Giovanni Sartori calls "concept stretching."⁴⁵ As critics have rightly noted, soft balancing is simply normal diplomatic negotiation.⁴⁶ Such diplomatic negotiation is distinct from balancing and therefore provides inadequate support for balance of power theory. Nevertheless, despite the conceptual and theoretical problems associated with soft balancing, diplomatic coordination that falls short of traditional balancing can still be significant for policymakers and is therefore worthy of analysis.⁴⁷ This study will attempt to analyze the ways, short of traditional balancing, in which China and Russia seek to constrain U.S. power. A subsequent section in this chapter addresses concrete examples of alleged soft balancing and other forms of strategic cooperation between China and Russia.

⁴³ Walt, *Taming American Power*, 141-143.

⁴⁴ Pape, "Soft Balancing Against the United States," 9-10.

⁴⁵ Giovanni Sartori, "Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics," *American Political Science Review* 64 (December 1970): 1034-1035.

⁴⁶ Richard Little, *The Balance of Power in International Relations: Metaphors, Myths and Models* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 265.

⁴⁷ Daniel H. Nexon, "The Balance of Power in the Balance," *World Politics* 61 (2009), 330-359.

Structural change: U.S. primacy, the rise of China, and China-Russia relations

The previous section offered an essentially static analysis of the unipolar structure of the international system and its effects on China-Russia relations. This approach is useful because it isolates one factor, the preponderance of U.S. power, which has been a constant throughout the period under study, imposing both incentives and constraints on the foreign policy options of China and Russia. This constant helps to explain some outcomes that have also been largely constant throughout this period. These include a general desire by China and Russia to cooperate with each other to form at least a partial counterweight to U.S. power, but also a reluctance to form an alliance or otherwise challenge U.S. power too directly because of the high risk and likely costs of such an approach.

A static analysis also suffers from limitations, however. It fails to draw attention to changes in foreign policy outcomes that result from changes in relative power within an existing structure. Such an analysis also leaves aside issues such as future change in the structure of the international system, the likely features of the new structure, and the effects of structural change on foreign policy outcomes. Amid uncertainty about the durability of unipolarity and U.S. primacy, as well as anticipation of China's possible rise to superpower status, concerns about systems transformation are especially pressing. The role of systemic transformation is an essential factor in understanding major developments in international relations since the end of the Cold War, including the evolution of the China-Russia relationship. In order to understand variation in China-Russia relations, it is necessary to analyze independent variables that changed during this period. Changes in relative power were an especially important factor.

Dynamic theories that address change in the international system are therefore also crucial in assessing China-Russia relations during this period. Whereas static theories tend to focus on

U.S. primacy, theories of systems transformation draw attention to the rise of China, the potential decline of U.S. power, and other possible changes in relative power throughout the international system. Some of the big questions that these theories address, including the potential for a U.S.-China superpower confrontation, still lie in the future. Therefore, it is too early to draw anything more than preliminary conclusions about the effect that such a U.S.-China rivalry would have on China-Russia relations. Nevertheless, dynamic theories shed light on the early stages of this process and offer frameworks for evaluating future trends. For both China and Russia, anticipated changes in relative power are a crucial consideration in the formulation of national strategies. Two well-known dynamic theories, power transition theory and hegemonic theory, offer similar analyses of the rise and fall of great powers.

Power transition theory, devised by A.F.K. Organski and elaborated by Jacek Kugler and others, contends that one great power usually dominates the system but eventually faces a threat from a rising, dissatisfied challenger. According to this theory, major war is especially likely during periods in which the distribution of power in the international system is roughly equal. When two states have roughly equal power, each may believe that it can win a war. By contrast, when one state enjoys a dominant position, other states know that they lack the power to challenge it. This promotes peace and stability. According to this theory, the dissatisfied challenger initiates a war against the hegemon in order to overturn the existing international order. This tends to be a strategic mistake, for at least two reasons. First, the challenger tends to strike before its power has matched that of the hegemon. Second, the dominant state usually leads an alliance of satisfied states that is stronger than any alliance that the challenger is able to muster.⁴⁸ The latter point

⁴⁸ A.F.K. Organski and Jacek Kugler, *The War Ledger* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); Greg Cashman, *What Causes War? An Introduction to Theories of International Conflict*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014), 411-424.

underscores the importance that Russia could play in a potential great-power confrontation between China and the United States. Russia qualifies as a dissatisfied power with revisionist aims, but it remains far from certain that this would entice Russia to side with a rising China in a potential future confrontation with the United States.

Hegemonic stability theory and the hegemonic theory of war are similar in many respects to power transition theory. Robert Gilpin argues that one power's hegemonic leadership helps to create and maintain global stability. Using a rational choice model, Gilpin contends that a hegemon will attempt to increase its power as long as the marginal benefits of doing so exceed the costs. Likewise, a challenger will attempt to increase its power relative to that of the hegemon as long as the benefits outweigh the costs. In the end, this process leads to major war that causes a transformation of the international system.⁴⁹ One recent analysis of U.S.-China relations that draws implicitly on hegemonic theory argues that, in a potential U.S.-China confrontation, Russia would be the most valued ally that either side could secure. To date, Russia has chosen to ignore the potential threat to its interests from a rising China. Instead, it has opted for securing China's diplomatic support in Russia's disputes with the West, as well as China's markets for its arms and energy sales.⁵⁰

Power transition theory and the hegemonic theory of war are dyadic because they focus primarily on the competition between the leading power and the challenger, paying little attention to other actors in the system. These theories offer pessimistic assessments of the future of U.S.-China relations, suggesting that a superpower rivalry is virtually inevitable and that major war, if

⁴⁹ Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*; Robert Gilpin, "The Theory of Hegemonic War," in *The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars*, ed. Robert I. Rotberg and Theodore K. Rabb (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 15-37.

⁵⁰ Aaron L. Friedberg, *A Contest for Supremacy: China, America, and the Struggle for Mastery in Asia* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2011), 204-205.

not inevitable, is at least highly likely.⁵¹ They may shed light on the dynamics of China's rise and the likelihood of conflict with the United States, but they have less to say about the role of other actors in the system. They make no clear predictions, therefore, about how China's rise is likely to affect China-Russia relations. Moreover, a series of historical and statistical tests have failed to provide empirical support for these theories.⁵²

Another dynamic theory, Charles Doran's power cycle theory, focuses on all of the great powers in the central system. Doran argues that each great power passes through a cycle of relative power, measured as a percentage share of total power in the system. The cycle includes a lower turning point signaling entry into the central system of great powers, an initial phase of accelerating growth, an inflection point followed by slowing growth, a peak followed by accelerating decline, another inflection point followed by slowing decline, and eventually, potential exit from the ranks of great powers. As a state's relative power increases, it tends to seek a greater foreign policy role. Doran's empirical research has shown that states are more likely to become involved in major war at "critical points" such as the lower turning point, inflection points, and peak than they are in other, "normal" periods of history. The critical intervals, which are a period immediately around the critical point, are times of great stress and uncertainty for countries. When countries reach their first inflection point, they sense that their relative power growth is slowing. Their projected trajectories of future power growth, which had previously reflected straight-line projections from their earlier growth rates, suddenly become unattainable. In this situation, countries are prone to

⁵¹ For a recent work that makes similar warnings about the future of U.S.-China relations, see Graham Allison, *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017).

⁵² Greg Cashman, *What Causes War? An Introduction to Theories of International Conflict*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014), 411-424.

panic, based on the fear that they will never be able to achieve their long-cherished expectations for power and foreign policy role.⁵³

Power cycle theory disputes structural realism's contention that bipolarity is more stable than multipolarity. In fact, according to power cycle theory, no correlation exists between the structure of the international system as Waltz defined it and international stability. Changes in relative power, which lead to systems transformation, are the drivers of major war, according to power cycle theory. A forthcoming study by Doran and one of his former students presents empirical findings in support of these arguments.⁵⁴

The economic reforms that Deng Xiaoping introduced in the late 1970s launched China onto a path of sustained economic growth. As a result, China entered a period of accelerating growth in relative power. However, China may soon reach, or perhaps may already have reached as of this writing, its first inflection point. Doran argues that India's growth has taken relative power share away from a rising China, causing China to enter a phase of slowing growth preceding its eventual peak in relative power. According to the theory, China will suddenly face a gap between its expectations about future power, based upon straight-line projections of prior growth, and the reality of its slowing growth in relative power. This experience will be traumatic for China, as it has been for previous rising powers, Doran argues. Managing China-India relations will therefore pose a daunting challenge during this century.⁵⁵ This prospect would pose interesting challenges for Russia, which has maintained friendly relations with India for many years and sees

⁵³ Charles F. Doran, *Systems in Crisis: New Imperatives of High Politics at Century's End* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Charles F. Doran, "Economics, Philosophy of History, and the 'Single Dynamic' of Power Cycle Theory: Expectations, Competition, and Statecraft," *International Political Science Review* 24, no. 1 (2003): 13-49.

⁵⁴ Charles F. Doran and Bryan Frederick, "Why (Neo)Realism Needs Power Cycle Theory." Paper presented at annual meeting of the International Studies Association in San Francisco in April 2018.

⁵⁵ Charles F. Doran, "Power Cycle and the Ascendancy of China: Peaceful or Stormy?" *SAIS Review* 32, no. 1 (2012): 80-81.

it as a potential counterweight to China. Russia has sold some weapons systems to India that were of a higher technological level than those sold to China, and it welcomes India's role alongside China in multilateral organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the BRICS.

Some of China's recent foreign policy assertiveness may reflect the pressures that the country's leaders feel as they approach the first inflection point on their power cycle. According to this view, their perception of U.S. decline offers a window of opportunity to act. This may explain, for example, China's recent efforts to strengthen its claims in the South China Sea. China's leaders may have sensed that they should act quickly, rather than waiting, for at least two reasons. First, as China's economic growth rates fall, the country's growth in relative power may slow. This would leave China in a weaker position than at present to act. Second, acting soon might be more advantageous than waiting until the United States, India, Japan, and Australia had strengthened their coordination with the goal of resisting China's encroachments.⁵⁶

Russia, meanwhile, is attempting to pass through the lower turning point on its power cycle, Doran writes. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia suffered a precipitous decline on its power cycle that was historically unprecedented. Throughout the 1990s, Russia remained weak and largely unable to resist U.S. foreign policy decisions that it opposed, most notably NATO expansion, or to assert the foreign policy role of a great power. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, however, Russia began to recover. Fueled by rising energy prices, Russia experienced sustained economic growth between 2000 and 2008. In 2008, Russia initiated a campaign of military modernization, with military spending growing by as much as 18 percent per year. Popular perceptions that Russia is still a declining power, or that it is merely a regional power, are incorrect,

⁵⁶ Author's e-mail correspondence with Charles Doran, December 2017.

in Doran's view. Although Russia remains weak, and in terms of power cycle theory remains at the bottom of its cycle, it is slowly attempting to traverse the lower turning point.⁵⁷

Consistent with power cycle theory, as with realism generally, both China and Russia have sought to enlarge their foreign policy roles as their relative power has grown. What makes their actions especially challenging for Western leaders, however, is that they have done so in ways that are incompatible with conceptions of the liberal international order. In particular, both China and Russia have sought to establish spheres of influence around their peripheries. This effort, Doran writes, is an outgrowth of the two countries' authoritarian domestic political structures. Their leaders, largely unconstrained by internal checks and balances, seek to subordinate neighboring states and sever those states' security relationships with other states.⁵⁸ "Russia and China are stirring politically on the edges of the world in uncoordinated but ominous ways," Doran writes.⁵⁹

With both China and Russia potentially reaching critical points on their power cycles, the coming years could be turbulent. Structural change in the international system does not lead inevitably to the outbreak of major war, but peaceful management of such change requires skilled diplomacy. Power cycle theory also raises the possibility that China and Russia might not refrain indefinitely from coordination of their challenges to the international system. Research on power cycle theory has shown that states are more likely to form alliances while passing through critical intervals on their power cycles than during normal periods of history.⁶⁰ One recent article by a Chinese analyst noted this finding from power cycle theory. Although he argued that the formation of a China-Russia alliance remained unlikely, he acknowledged that structural change in the

⁵⁷ Charles F. Doran, "Imperatives of European Security at Russia's Critical Point on its Power Cycle," *Stosunki Międzynarodowe – International Relations* 51, no. 2 (2015): 93-105.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 95-96.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁶⁰ Daniel Y. Chiu, "International Alliances in the Power Cycle Theory of State Behavior," *International Political Science Review* 24, no. 123 (2003): 123-136.

international system could create pressures that might cause policymakers in both countries to consider this option.⁶¹

Domestic Politics, State Preferences, and National Identities

The structure of the international systems imposes constraints on states' actions but does not fully determine them. In order to explain states' foreign policy decisions, it is necessary to analyze domestic factors. Several different theoretical perspectives emphasize the importance of the domestic level in analyzing foreign policy outcomes.

Within the realist school, one theoretical approach that incorporates domestic factors in an attempt to explain foreign policy decisions is neoclassical realism.⁶² This approach seeks to preserve neorealism's emphasis on the constraints imposed by the structure of the international system while also incorporating classical realism's insights on the relationship between state and society. Neoclassical realism, like neorealism, views the distribution of relative power within the international system as the main independent variable. Unlike neorealism, which seeks to explain recurring outcomes at the level of the international system, neoclassical realism aims to explain foreign policy outcomes. It therefore adds domestic constraints and elite perceptions as intervening variables.⁶³ In addition to neoclassical realism's utility in explaining states' foreign policy

⁶¹ 谢超：《与中国结盟吗？—俄罗斯国家利益与中俄结盟概率》，《当代亚太》，2016年第4期，第44-69页 [Xie Chao, "To Form an Alliance with China? Russia's National Interests and the Probability of a China-Russia Alliance," *Dangdai Yatai* 2016 (4): 44-69].

⁶² Gideon Rose coined the term "neoclassical realism" in a review essay on several works that employed this distinctive approach. Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," *World Politics* 51, no. 1 (October 1998), 144-177.

⁶³ Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, Steven E. Lobell, and Norrin M. Ripsman, "Introduction: Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy," in Steven E. Lobell, Norrin M. Ripsman, and Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, eds., *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1-41.

decisions, it is also conducive to a theoretically informed narrative, which is this study's chosen methodology.⁶⁴

This section uses a modified neoclassical realist framework to analyze China-Russia relations during the period 1991-2016. The analysis of structural effects encompasses not only static conceptions of structure, but also changes in relative power, while viewing the formation of national identity as a crucial intervening variable at the domestic level. Before introducing the neoclassical realist framework, it is useful to assess some other theories of foreign policy to compare the ways in which they incorporate systemic and domestic factors. This will help to clarify the distinctive features of neoclassical realism.

Neoclassical realism and theories of foreign policy

Some liberal theories of international relations, known as *Innenpolitik* theories, argue that domestic factors are the crucial independent variables that determine foreign policy outcomes.⁶⁵ In contrast with neoclassical realism's continued focus on the primacy of structural factors, some liberal theories of international relations offer "inside-out" frameworks that stress the primacy of domestic factors, including societal actors. The literature on democratic peace theory is one example. One proponent of *Innenpolitik* explanations, Andrew Moravcsik, argues that state preferences are a crucial determinant of foreign policy decisions. He views the formation of state preferences as a domestic process featuring bargaining among the state and societal actors. In any analysis that accepts the premise that both structural constraints and state preferences affect states' foreign policy decisions, he argues, liberal theory focusing on domestic processes should enjoy causal priority. If the preferences of a group of states form in such a way that they have no cause

⁶⁴ Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," 153.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 148.

for the outbreak of conflict among themselves, then the structure of the system will lack explanatory value in assessing the outcome of their interactions. Therefore, scholars should first examine state preferences to determine whether a conflict of interests exists, and only then proceed to an analysis of structure.⁶⁶

This approach has potential value in assessing China-Russia relations. For example, the pro-Western liberals who composed Russia's government in the early period following the breakup of the Soviet Union sought to integrate their country into the West. One influential foreign policy document from this period that reflected the views of the country's liberal leadership, as discussed in Chapter 2, downplayed the importance of the new unipolar structure of the international system. One could argue that if this group of leaders had succeeded in setting their country on a path of successful democratic and free-market reform, then no basis would have existed for the deep disputes between Russia and the West in the period that followed. This might have prevented Russia and China from improving their relations to the extent that later occurred, or it might even have caused estrangement in their relationship.

To be sure, the failure of liberal reform was partly a result of domestic processes within Russia, including the economic distress of the 1990s. However, international factors also played a role. When making foreign policy decisions, leaders must play a "two-level game" in which both domestic and international factors interact with each other.⁶⁷ In the new unipolar order, the United States faced fewer constraints on its freedom of action in foreign policy than it had during the Cold War.⁶⁸ As a result, the United States was free to pursue policies that Russia opposed, most

⁶⁶ Andrew Moravcsik, "Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics," *International Organization* 51, no. 4 (1997): 541-544.

⁶⁷ Robert Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games," *International Organization* 42, no. 3 (1988): 427-460.

⁶⁸ Robert Jervis, "Unipolarity: A Structural Perspective," *World Politics* 61, no. 1 (2009): 197-198.

importantly NATO expansion, which the Russian liberal reformers' domestic opponents seized upon for domestic political advantage. The formation of Russian state preferences, therefore, was not purely a domestic process. The unipolar structure of the international system also exerted influence. This is an example of how *Innenpolitik* theories can miss crucial systemic factors.

Within the paradigm of structural realism, scholars have introduced two theories of foreign policy, known as offensive and defensive realism.⁶⁹ Defensive realists take a relatively benign view of international anarchy. They believe that states usually can afford to be relaxed about their security, arousing themselves to action only on the rare occasions when genuine external threats arise.⁷⁰ If a state seeks to maximize power, it is likely to provoke reactions by other states, including arms buildups and the formation of alliances, which could make that state less secure than if it had adopted a more restrained approach.⁷¹ The main concern of defensive realists is the outbreak of avoidable international conflict through the operation of the security dilemma, the spiral model of conflict, and other crisis dynamics that occur in the absence of a real incompatibility of interests.⁷² In the view of defensive realists, the structure of the international system provides clear incentives for states to pursue restrained foreign policies and to refrain from aggression or overexpansion. When states fail to heed these incentives, domestic factors are often to blame.⁷³ Therefore, defensive realists view either systemic incentives or domestic factors as the independent variable driving foreign policy decisions.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition* (Cornell, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991), 11-12.

⁷⁰ Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," 149.

⁷¹ Snyder, *Myths of Empire*, 6.

⁷² Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 53-113; Robert Jervis, "Realism, Neoliberalism, and Cooperation: Understanding the Debate," *International Security* 24, no. 1 (1999): 42-63.

⁷³ Snyder, *Myths of Empire*.

⁷⁴ Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," 154.

Defensive realism offers a plausible explanation of the evolution of China-Russia relations since 1991. In this view, the strategic partnership between China and Russia is essentially defensive in character.⁷⁵ Although both China and Russia developed concerns about the unipolar distribution of power in the international system, they did not perceive direct threats to the security of their territory from the United States. Therefore, an alliance was unnecessary to provide for their security. Moreover, the formation of an alliance might have provoked a confrontation with the United States that would have made both states less secure than otherwise. Both states remained dissatisfied with the international order and sought opportunities to improve their positions, especially as their relative power grew. They were careful, however, not to push these efforts so far as to provoke a backlash. The relatively restrained foreign policy strategy that China pursued between 1996 and 2008 aimed to prevent the formation of a counterbalancing coalition among the United States and its allies in Asia that could have threatened China's rise to superpower status.⁷⁶ Since 2008, both China and Russia have asserted their regional interests more intensely, perceiving a decline in U.S. power and commitment in Asia and Europe. They have done so with care, however, employing the tactic of "probing" to test U.S. commitment in low-level ways that are designed to avoid a strong reaction by the United States.⁷⁷ Defensive realism also calls attention to the risks in such strategies, however. For example, in the view of some scholars, the budding competition between China and the United States in the South China Sea could be more prone to crisis instability in the near term than is commonly recognized.⁷⁸ The pattern of China-Russia

⁷⁵ Chenghong Li, "Limited Defensive Strategic Partnership: Sino-Russian Rapprochement and the Driving Forces," *Journal of Contemporary China* 16, no. 52 (2007): 477-497.

⁷⁶ Avery Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge: China's Grand Strategy and International Security* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).

⁷⁷ Jakub J. Grygiel and A. Wess Mitchell, *The Unquiet Frontier: Rising Rivals, Vulnerable Allies, and the Crisis of American Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 42-76.

⁷⁸ Avery Goldstein, "First Things First: The Pressing Danger of Crisis Instability in U.S.-China Relations," *International Security* 37, no. 4 (2013): 49-89.

relations during this period generally conforms to the expectations of defensive realism. As discussed below, however, the formation of national identity has also influenced the two countries' interactions in important ways, especially in their joint efforts to resist the spread of liberal Western norms.

Offensive realism presents a starkly contrasting view of state action. The writings of John Mearsheimer, a prominent offensive realist, suggest that dynamics within the U.S.-China-Russia triangle could be much more volatile in the coming years than defensive realism would expect. In an anarchic international system, states' primary goal is survival. Because states can never be sure of other states' intentions, they must base their strategies upon those other states' capabilities. The most reliable way for states to assure their own security is to maximize their power. Because global hegemony is an unattainable goal, states aim to achieve regional hegemony.⁷⁹ In offensive realism's conceptualization, the structure of the international system is the crucial independent variable, and domestic factors are relatively unimportant.⁸⁰

According to Mearsheimer's argument, if China maintains high-speed economic growth, then it will seek to achieve hegemony in Asia, just as the United States has achieved hegemony in the Western Hemisphere. The United States, however, is likely to pursue its traditional goal of preventing another great power from gaining hegemony in either Europe or Asia. This will inevitably produce a clash between the United States and China.⁸¹

Mearsheimer makes a further specific prediction about the future of China-Russia relations. Because China's neighbors will fear its growing power, they will join a U.S.-led balancing coalition against it. These neighbors will include not only countries such as Japan, India, South

⁷⁹ John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001).

⁸⁰ Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," 154.

⁸¹ John J. Mearsheimer, "Can China Rise Peacefully?" *The National Interest*, October 2014.

Korea, and Vietnam, but also Russia. The Asian regional order will be multipolar, with Russia maintaining its great-power status and Japan and India eventually attaining such status as well, but the system will exhibit unbalanced multipolarity because China will be far stronger than the other Asian powers. Unbalanced multipolarity, in Mearsheimer's view, is an especially dangerous structure because it generates the most fear among members of the system.⁸² Thus, Mearsheimer's theory emphasizes the likelihood of future conflict between China and Russia rather than joint China-Russia balancing against the United States. This possibility lies in the future and cannot yet be subjected to empirical analysis. Elsewhere, however, Mearsheimer has argued that U.S. foreign policy, including NATO expansion and what he considers to be the West's mishandling of the Ukraine crisis that began in late 2013, has pushed Russia toward China. This is a mistake, he argues, because in the future the United States will need Russia's help in countering China, the only state in the system that poses a genuine challenge to the U.S. position.⁸³

In contrast with these structural realist viewpoints, which assert a direct link between systemic constraints and the foreign policy decisions of states, constructivism dismisses the importance of the structure of the international system. Alexander Wendt, in his seminal article on the constructivist approach to international relations, argued that "anarchy is what states make of it."⁸⁴ In contrast with liberal theories that conceptualize the formation of state preferences as a purely domestic process involving bargaining among the state and societal actors, constructivism views the formation of national identity as a process that results from ongoing interactions among states in the international system. In Wendt's conception, the pattern of national identities should be understood as part of the structure of the international system itself. Waltz famously offered a

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ John J. Mearsheimer, "Why the Ukraine Crisis is the West's Fault," *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 5 (September/October 2014).

⁸⁴ Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What State Make of It," *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (1992): 391-425.

three-part definition of the structure, including its ordering principle, the functional differentiation of units, and the distribution of capabilities across units.⁸⁵ Wendt proposed adding a fourth: “the intersubjectively constituted structure of identities and interests in the system.”⁸⁶ A pure constructivist approach, therefore, discounts the importance of the structure of the international system, at least when conceptualized in purely material terms.

Neoclassical realism occupies a middle ground between structural theories and constructivism. Like structural realists, neoclassical realists accept that the international system features a distribution of relative power among states that is something approaching an objective reality. Like constructivists, however, they recognize that systemic factors do not always determine states’ foreign policy decisions directly. “The world states end up inhabiting, therefore, is indeed partly of their own making,” writes Gideon Rose in an article describing the neoclassical realist approach to the study of foreign policy.⁸⁷

In studies that employ the neoclassical realist framework, two domestic factors that may distort states’ responses to systemic incentives have received special attention, namely leaders’ perceptions and misperceptions of the international balance of power, on the one hand, and the strength of a country’s state apparatus, on the other.⁸⁸ This study argues that neither factor has influenced China-Russia relations significantly during this period. Although uncertainty about relative power is often present in international relations, Chinese and Russian leaders during this period appeared to maintain reasonably accurate perceptions of the international balance of power. When they became aware that they had miscalculated, as China appears to have done following the March 1996 Taiwan Strait crisis, they adjusted their foreign policy expeditiously. Neither

⁸⁵ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 100-101.

⁸⁶ Wendt, “Anarchy Is What State Make of It,” 401.

⁸⁷ Rose, “Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy,” 152-153.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 157-165.

country committed a grave error in foreign policy resulting from a clear misperception of the balance of power. Nor did either country fail to respond to structural incentives because of a weak state apparatus. During the 1990s, Russia's state apparatus was weak, but its relative power in the international system was also weak. The strengthening of the Russian state since Putin's rise to the presidency at the turn of the century coincided with a partial recovery of Russian power. The Chinese Communist Party also maintains its firm grip on power, enabling the leadership to implement its foreign policy decisions without significant resistance at the domestic level.

This study, therefore, focuses on a different intervening variable, namely the formation of national identity in China and Russia. The structure of the international system, including changes in relative power, has strongly influenced both countries' foreign policy decisions since the breakup of the Soviet Union, including decisions about the China-Russia relationship. At the same time, the two countries' particular attributes, many of which fall under the framework of national identity, have conditioned the two countries' responses to their international environment. The convergence of the two countries' national identities has caused them to increase bilateral coordination beyond the level that an assessment of national interests derived purely from structural factors would suggest.

National identity

Gilbert Rozman offers a framework for assessing national identity and the role that it has played in China-Russia relations.⁸⁹ He analyzes national identity along six dimensions: an ideological dimension; a temporal dimension encompassing views of history; a sectoral dimension

⁸⁹ Gilbert Rozman, *The Sino-Russian Challenge to the World Order: National Identities, Bilateral Relations, and East Versus West in the 2010s* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2014).

combining political, economic, and cultural identity; a vertical dimension for the state's internal organization; a horizontal dimension centering on international relations; and a measure of the intensity of national identity.⁹⁰ Although the traditional conception of national interests is important for understanding the evolution of China-Russia relations since the breakup of the Soviet Union, national identity has been the crucial driver of the relationship during this period, Rozman argues.

Since the mid-1990s, the two countries have drawn closer together based on an affinity between their national identities.⁹¹ Their national identities overlap because the governing regimes in both countries share the legacy of traditional communism, antipathy toward the values that the U.S.-led international community promotes, and the goal of changing the rules of the international system.⁹² The problem, in the view of Chinese and Russian leaders, is not merely a divergence of interests with those of the United States, but incompatible views of the international system. In joint declarations and other pronouncements, China and Russia have repeatedly accused the United States of not just safeguarding its national interests, but of pursuing messianic goals in a way that could aggravate a clash of civilizations. They demonize the West, led by the United States, as a civilization with dangerous ambitions, and they insist that their assertiveness in foreign policy is merely a response to U.S. provocations. This critique not only represents a misunderstanding of U.S. objectives, Rozman argues, but also projects the two countries' own view of a clash of civilizations onto the United States.⁹³ This analysis, particularly its emphasis on the important role that the United States plays in the horizontal dimension of identity for both China and Russia, is consistent with power cycle theory's expectation that states will seek greater foreign policy roles

⁹⁰ Ibid, 5.

⁹¹ Ibid, 23.

⁹² Ibid, 275.

⁹³ Ibid, 20-21.

as their relative power increases. If gaps open between expectations and reality, then this could be a source of international tension, especially as both China and Russia enter critical intervals on their power cycles.

Rozman notes a divergence of views on how national identity gaps form and widen.⁹⁴ In one view, such gaps form through the process of interactions among states.⁹⁵ In another view, fundamental civilizational differences cause clashes to deepen.⁹⁶ In some cases, however, political elites demonize rival countries for their own domestic and foreign policy reasons.⁹⁷ Beginning in the mid-1990s, when both countries were experiencing tension in relations with the United States, China and Russia consciously decided to downplay their differences in order to narrow the identity gap between their two countries. Their objective was to achieve greater solidarity in resisting U.S. pressure.⁹⁸ As of this writing, this consensus remained in place. The result was that China and Russia grew closer together, even as the growing power imbalance in China's favor caused their national interests to diverge.⁹⁹

The principal dynamic in China-Russia relations since the breakup of the Soviet Union, Rozman argues, is that China has appealed to Russia for greater solidarity, and Russia has turned to China to express its anger at the West.¹⁰⁰ In the immediate aftermath of the Soviet breakup, the prospects for China-Russia relations hardly seemed promising. In 1992, the identity gap between China and Russia briefly peaked. China's ruling Communist Party, which had supported the August 1991 coup attempt in the Soviet Union, viewed the new Russian president, Boris Yeltsin,

⁹⁴ Ibid, 29.

⁹⁵ See for example Wendt, "Anarchy Is What State Make of It," 391-425.

⁹⁶ See for example Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

⁹⁷ Rozman, *The Sino-Russian Challenge to the World Order*, 29.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 266.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 23.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 274.

as an enemy of socialism and feared that Russia would tilt toward the West. Russia's liberal leaders, in turn, were critical of the Chinese leadership for its 1989 crackdown in Tiananmen Square and believed that China had little to offer Russia diplomatically or economically. This period of estrangement quickly passed, however, as the two countries improved relations throughout 1992, culminating in Yeltsin's visit to Beijing in December of that year.¹⁰¹

Since then, a series of developments have pushed China and Russia closer together. Between 1994 and 1996, Russia turned toward China in response to NATO expansion and Western criticism of the war in Chechnya. China, which was upset by perceived U.S. support for Taiwan's attempt during this period to gain *de jure* independence, welcomed Russia's diplomatic outreach. In 1999, the Kosovo War stimulated cooperation between China and Russia, both of which opposed the emerging doctrine of humanitarian intervention. In 2004-2006, the outbreak of "color revolutions," which occurred in the wake of the U.S. invasion of Iraq and promotion of the "freedom agenda," aroused concern in both countries. In 2011-2013, the turbulence of the Arab Spring caused a similar reaction.¹⁰² Putin's return to the presidency in 2012 and Xi Jinping's assumption of power later that same year also created momentum in China-Russia relations, as both leaders adopted an assertive approach in foreign policy.¹⁰³

In most of these episodes, the threat that China and Russia perceived was primarily to their own forms of domestic governance. Rather than similar national interests, a strong correspondence in regime interests, closely connected to national identity, was the major driving force in China-Russia relations during this period, Rozman argues. Therefore, China and Russia have grown closer together despite an emerging clash of national interests. For the sake of maintaining

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 243-244.

¹⁰² Ibid, 245, 274.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 250-251.

solidarity in opposition to the United States, China and Russia have set aside diverging interests that are most apparent in sub-regions of Asia. For example, China and Russia have sought to reach an accommodation regarding their respective interests in Central Asia. China has also taken an understanding view toward Russia's cultivation of relations with some of China's rivals in Asia, including India, Japan, and Vietnam. These potential sources of tension, Rozman argues, are among the reasons that China and Russia are unlikely to develop close ties similar to those that exist between the United States and its allies. The national identity gap between China and Russia could eventually widen, but it would be wise, in Rozman's view, to assume that a close China-Russia relationship based on convergent national identities will be an important force in world affairs for some time to come.¹⁰⁴

A neoclassical realist framework

Drawing upon insights from the theoretical perspectives discussed above, this section outlines a neoclassical realist framework for analyzing China-Russia relations during the period between 1991 and 2016. As discussed above, neoclassical realism views the structure of the international system as the independent variable, domestic factors as intervening variables, and foreign policy decisions as the dependent variable. The analysis here slightly modifies this framework to focus on changing relative power as a crucial feature of the structure of the international system, as well as on national identity, which has a strong domestic component, as an important factor in foreign policy outcomes.

The structural change resulting from the breakup of the Soviet Union provided the context for the subsequent development of China-Russia relations. The new unipolar structure of the

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 275-276.

international system offered incentives for China and Russia to cooperate in order to form at least a partial counterweight to U.S. power. At the same time, unipolarity imposed constraints that limited the extent of the China-Russia relationship. Because the United States held a preponderance of power, even a China-Russia alliance would have been insufficient to provide balance. China and Russia therefore limited their cooperation to diplomacy and rhetoric that would signal their dissatisfaction with the existing order, but not prompt a forceful response by the United States.

Changes in relative power were an important determinant of dynamics within the U.S.-Russia-China triangle during this period. Power cycle theory, like realism generally, predicts that states will act increasingly assertively and seek a greater foreign policy role as their relative power increases.¹⁰⁵ This was true for both Russia and China during this period. In both cases, the perception of U.S. decline made a difference. During the decade that followed the breakup of the Soviet Union, Russia endured a period of weakness that limited its ability to respond to U.S. foreign policy decisions that it opposed, including NATO expansion. As Russia partially recovered its power during the first decade of the twenty-first century, it became increasingly assertive in foreign policy. By the time of the August 2008 war in Georgia, Russia sensed that it could take a forceful stand against the further expansion of Euro-Atlantic institutions into former Soviet territory. Russia correctly concluded that the United States, having suffered setbacks during years of war in Afghanistan and Iraq, would not come to Georgia's defense. In 2014, perceiving a U.S. foreign policy retrenchment, Russia drew a similar conclusion about Ukraine. Between 1996 and 2008, with some exceptions, China pursued a relatively reassuring foreign policy toward its neighbors, aiming to create a favorable external environment for its continued rise. In the wake of

¹⁰⁵ Doran, *Systems in Crisis*; Doran, "Economics, Philosophy of History, and the 'Single Dynamic' of Power Cycle Theory," 13-49.

the global financial crisis, China perceived that the United States, though still the world's most powerful country by a wide margin, had suffered a decline in relative power. Since then, China has pursued an increasingly assertive foreign policy.

The particular way in which China and Russia have asserted themselves, including the role that each country plays in the other's strategy, results not only from structural factors, but also from national identity. For reasons discussed above, Rozman's vertical and horizontal dimensions of identity, focusing on domestic governance and international relations respectively, have been crucial factors in the development of China-Russia relations. As China and Russia have sought a greater foreign policy role for themselves, they have inevitably confronted the reality of U.S. power. They have also confronted Western ideas that they find troubling, including the desire to spread democracy and human rights norms throughout the world. Limited in their ability to engage in traditional great-power balancing, and in any case not perceiving a direct threat to their security, China and Russia have nevertheless provided each other with diplomatic support for their international ambitions. This support includes several elements. The two countries have supported each other in their opposition to an international community dominated by liberal Western values. They have joined each other in defiance of Western criticism of their domestic governance, as both countries feared U.S. efforts to promote democratic change in their own societies.

While professing support for the principle of state sovereignty, both China and Russia attempted to establish spheres of influence in their own regions. These efforts also grew out of the two countries' national identities, as spheres of influence were a logical extension of authoritarian domestic rule into adjacent regions. The primary means by which the two countries attempted to establish their spheres of influence was through probing. Using this tactic, both countries mounted low-level challenges to neighboring countries that were allies or friends of the United States, with

the goal of testing U.S. power and commitment.¹⁰⁶ Neither China nor Russia fully supported the other's regional ambitions. However, they maintained neutrality in these disputes, refused to serve as an obstacle to the other's ambitions, and in some cases provided modest diplomatic support for the other's position.

While attempting to establish regional spheres of influence, the two countries also laid the groundwork for attempts to play larger roles on the international stage. To promote these efforts, both countries declared their support for multipolarity. In their conception of multipolarity, both countries would establish spheres of influence in their own regions. These declarations obscured differences in the two countries' objectives, however. Russia sought multipolarity in order to recover its great-power status and to avoid marginalization. China, by contrast, despite its rhetoric about multipolarity, was increasingly oriented toward the prospect of bipolarity. Nevertheless, China's leaders perceived utility in promoting multipolarity, with Russia as one of the great powers, because this would allow China to avoid being the focus of all U.S. pressure.¹⁰⁷ In this way, Russia could serve as a sort of release valve. China and Russia obscured their differences over multipolarity in order to express their shared desire for a world order in which the United States would be less dominant than it was in the period following the Soviet collapse. These shared views, which resulted from both structural factors and national identity, formed the ideational foundation of the China-Russia strategic partnership. The next section looks more closely at the substantive details of China-Russia cooperation.

¹⁰⁶ Grygiel and Mitchell, *The Unquiet Frontier*.

¹⁰⁷ Author's interview with Da Wei, director of the Institute of American Studies, China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations, Beijing, April 24, 2015.

The Substance of the China-Russia Strategic Partnership

One way to conceptualize the substance of China-Russia cooperation in the post-Soviet period is to think of a “ladder of cooperation” rising from minimum to maximum levels of bilateral cooperation. At the bottom of the ladder, one would find the minimal demands of cooperation that two partners would make of each other, including non-aggression and the agreement not to join an alliance directed against the other. At the top of the ladder would be a comprehensive military-political alliance. Along the way, the steps of the ladder would include various forms of cooperation at intermediate levels. This section will start at the bottom of the ladder and work its way up. Some of the categories below may overlap one another, but the analysis here generally flows from limited to more highly developed forms of cooperation.

Non-aggression and diplomatic support

The minimal demand that China and Russia placed on each other during the period under study was to avoid a repeat of the Sino-Soviet tensions from the Cold War era. This process began during the 1980s, when the Soviet Union achieved normalization of relations with China, and continued during the post-Soviet period. In order to meet one of China’s three conditions for normalizing relations, Mikhail Gorbachev drastically reduced the Soviet military presence along China’s border.¹⁰⁸ China and the Soviet Union reached an initial agreement on their disputed border in May 1991. Subsequent agreements between China and Russia in 1994, 2004, and 2008 achieved, for the first time in the two countries’ history, the full delimitation and demarcation of their border. In 1996 and 1997, China reached agreements with Russia and three Central Asian

¹⁰⁸ As discussed in Chapter 2, China’s other two demands were for Soviet forces to withdraw from Afghanistan and for the Soviet Union to compel Vietnamese forces to withdraw from Cambodia.

countries on demilitarization and military confidence-building measures along their borders. All of these steps contributed significantly to the national security of both China and Russia.

The Treaty of Good-Neighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation, which China and Russia signed in July 2001, formalized the minimal demands of cooperation. This document included a mutual non-aggression clause, an agreement not to join alliances directed against the other, and a commitment by both countries not to allow a third country to use their own territory for the purpose of threatening the other. Although this document did not include a mutual security guarantee, and therefore fell short of signifying the formation of an alliance, it did include a provision calling for the two states to consult with each other in the event that either country faced a threat to its security. Factors intrinsic to the bilateral relationship between China and Russia gave both countries strong incentives to adopt all of these measures, which were vital for both countries' security and economic development. The United States was also an important factor, however, as such understandings were necessary preconditions for attempts by China and Russia to check U.S. power.

In addition to these formal commitments to non-aggression and non-participation in any alliance directed against the other, both countries sought, more generally, to ensure that the other would not drift too far in other diplomatic directions. Immediately following the breakup of the Soviet Union, China feared that Russia's new liberal, pro-Western leaders would tilt toward the West, leaving China diplomatically isolated. China responded by remaining patient and carefully cultivating Russia's leadership, efforts that soon achieved results. By the end of 1992, Russia had already readjusted its foreign policy, making overtures in China's direction. China's concerns resurfaced in the period following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, when Russia again leaned toward the West. Once again, China remained patient. When U.S.-Russia relations soured

again, Russia turned back toward China. Russian leaders at times harbored their own concerns about U.S.-China relations. Their concern was that efforts by the United States and China to manage an increasingly bipolar world would leave Russia marginalized. For this reason, Russian leaders and analysts reacted negatively to the proposal for a U.S.-China G-2 arrangement that emerged in late 2008 and early 2009 in the wake of the global financial crisis. This concern may have been a factor in Russia's receptiveness to the Obama administration's proposed "reset." The reset, in turn, may have caused some consternation in China, once again, about overly close U.S.-Russia relations. The China-Russia strategic partnership that emerged in the 1990s helped to ensure that neither country moved too close to the United States for the other's comfort in any lasting way.

Economics, arms sales, and energy cooperation

Having secured the minimal demands of non-aggression and friendly relations, China and Russia also sought material benefits from their bilateral relationship. Throughout this period, economic ties grew significantly yet remained modest. China's economic relations with Russia remained insignificant compared to those with the United States and the European Union. Although China eventually became Russia's largest single trading partner, Russia's economic relationship with China lagged significantly behind its economic ties with the European Union, even after the imposition of sanctions in the wake of the Ukraine crisis. Although the two countries' overall economic ties remained modest, their cooperation in two important sectors, weapons sales and energy, reached high levels and carried strategic significance.

A confluence of events in both countries led to Russia's becoming the largest supplier of weapons to China during the post-Cold War period. After the crackdown in Tiananmen Square in

1989, Western countries imposed an arms embargo on China. In order to continue its program of military modernization, China had to look elsewhere for foreign suppliers. After the breakup of the Soviet Union, Russia's domestic defense industry, which had already seen its sales to members of the Warsaw Pact dry up, now faced a collapse of domestic orders as well. In order to preserve its domestic defense industry, which was necessary both for economic and security reasons, Russia had to find alternative foreign markets. It soon turned to China, delivering its first shipment of Su-27 fighter jets in 1992. Russian arms sales to China grew steadily before peaking during the middle of the first decade of the twenty-first century. These sales then fell sharply for several years as China increasingly relied upon its own domestic production. In recent years, Russian arms sales to China have once again approached their earlier peak levels, featuring deliveries of major weapons systems such as S-400 air defense systems and Su-35 fighter jets.¹⁰⁹ Between 1992 and 2016, China imported an estimated \$33.2 billion worth of weapons from Russia, which accounted for more than 79 percent of China's total weapons imports during this period.¹¹⁰

Although economic factors were the primary consideration driving Russian arms sales to China, these sales had clear strategic implications. Most obviously, they made a material contribution to China's growing military power, complicating U.S. efforts to prepare for possible scenarios of military conflict with China. In making decisions about arms sales to China, Russian leaders also paid attention to strategic considerations. Russia sold weapons to China that would be particularly useful in potential military conflict at sea against the United States and its Asian allies,

¹⁰⁹ Барабанов М., Кашин В., Макиенко К. Оборонная Промышленность и Торговля Вооружениями КНР. М.: РИСИ. 2013. С. 155-156 [Mikhail Barabanov, Vasily Kashin, Konstantin Makienko, *The Defense Industry and Arms Trade of the PRC* (Moscow: Russia Institute for Strategic Studies, 2013), 155-156]; Siemon T. Wezeman, "China, Russia and the shifting landscape of arms sales," Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), July 5, 2017, <https://www.sipri.org/commentary/topical-backgrounder/2017/china-russia-and-shifting-landscape-arms-sales>.

¹¹⁰ SIPRI Arms Transfers Database, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, <https://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers>.

rather than in a hypothetical land invasion of Russia. One recent analysis by Russian experts concluded that such arms sales served Russia's interests by forcing the United States to reorient its forces toward Asia and away from Europe.¹¹¹

The energy sector was another sphere in which the interests of Russia and China appeared to be complementary, though relations were slow to develop. For years, Russia debated whether to build an oil pipeline to China or to its own Pacific coast to serve markets throughout Asia. The first option would have been cheaper than the second and would have allowed Russia to tap into China's booming demand for energy, but it risked dependence on a single market. The second option offered Russia greater flexibility, but it would have been more expensive and risked alienating China and losing share in that crucial market. These deliberations reflected Russia's desire to maximize profits from oil sales in Asia, as well as its desire to maintain geopolitical flexibility in the region. In the wake of the financial crisis and the resulting collapse in oil prices, Russia agreed to the construction of an oil pipeline spur to China in return for Chinese loans to its state oil and pipeline companies. This pipeline, which was a spur from the East Siberia-Pacific Ocean (ESPO) pipeline that would eventually reach Russia's Pacific coast, went into operation in 2011. In 2016, Russia accounted for nearly 14 percent of China's oil imports.¹¹²

China and Russia also reached a breakthrough in the natural gas sector. After long deliberations, Russia agreed in May 2014 to the construction of a gas pipeline to China's northeastern region, one of two possible gas pipelines that the two countries had long discussed. Once again, Russia made this decision under pressure. On this occasion, it faced new sanctions that the West imposed following Russia's annexation of Crimea two months earlier. Under this

¹¹¹ Барабанов, Кашин, Макиенко. Оборонная Промышленность и Торговля Вооружениями КНР [Barabanov, Kashin, Makienko, *The Defense Industry and Arms Trade of the PRC*, 155-156]; author's interview with Vasily Kashin, Center for the Analysis of Strategies and Technology, Moscow, April 24, 2014.

¹¹² *BP Statistical Review of World Energy*, June 2017, 24.

agreement, Russia would supply China with 38 billion cubic meters of gas per year, instantly surpassing Turkmenistan to become China's largest supplier of natural gas. The pipeline was still under construction as of this writing.¹¹³

Although economic considerations and factors intrinsic to the China-Russia bilateral relationship were the main driver of energy relations, the results had important implications for international politics. China's purchases of oil and gas from Russia, as well as from Central Asia, were strategically significant because they reduced the share of China's imported energy resources that must pass through the Strait of Malacca. These energy deliveries therefore give China an added measure of energy security that would be useful if, during a potential armed conflict with the United States, the U.S. Navy were to block energy deliveries to China through the strait. Therefore, as in military-technical cooperation, Russia-China energy ties make a material contribution to China's growing power. Nevertheless, the course of energy relations has depended not primarily on the vicissitudes of both countries' relations with the West, but rather on the condition of Russia's economy, which relies heavily on exports of hydrocarbons. At times of low energy prices and resulting economic distress, Russia's interest in energy deals with China increased. The terms of Russia-China energy deals increasingly favor China, threatening Russia with excessive dependence on its strategic partner.

Strategic room for maneuver

A previous section of this chapter described ways in which China and Russia provide each other with diplomatic support on issues of world order. As mentioned, they maintain solidarity in

¹¹³ For an analysis of the May 2014 gas agreement, see Morena Skalamera, "The Sino-Russian Gas Partnership: Explaining the 2014 Breakthrough," Harvard Kennedy School Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, November 2014.

their calls for the right of every country to determine its own form of domestic governance, without foreign criticism or interference. They resist the dominance of a U.S.-led international community promoting liberal values, arguing that other civilizations should have the freedom to uphold their own values and to pursue their own development paths. They resist U.S. dominance and unipolarity, calling for the formation of a multipolar world. In their attempt to uphold these shared views, both countries set aside the divergence of their interests that results from the growing power imbalance in China's favor. In all of these respects, national identity shapes the particular way in which China and Russia respond to the international environment.

In their vision of multipolarity, China and Russia would play increasingly large roles in international politics. They would start by strengthening their positions in their own regions, where they would establish spheres of influence. This process has already been underway for several years. For both China and Russia, the chosen method for establishing spheres of influence is the tactic of "probing."¹¹⁴ According to one definition, probing is "a low-intensity and low-risk test aimed at gauging the opposing states' power and will to maintain security and influence over a region," but which also "studiously avoids a direct military confrontation with the leading power by targeting the outer limits of its commitments and interests."¹¹⁵

Power cycle theory helps to explain why probing has occurred with increasing frequency and intensity in recent years. At moments of great structural change, great powers experience tremendous uncertainty about their relative power and their standing in the international hierarchy. As a result, they are uncertain as to how far their power extends and how rival states might react if they seek to expand their influence.¹¹⁶ With China and Russia either passing through critical

¹¹⁴ Grygiel and Mitchell, *The Unquiet Frontier*, 42-76.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 43.

¹¹⁶ Doran, *Systems in Crisis*; Doran, "Economics, Philosophy of History, and the 'Single Dynamic' of Power Cycle Theory: Expectations, Competition, and Statecraft," 13-49.

points on their power cycle, or on the verge of doing so as of this writing, such uncertainty has been present in the international system in recent years, especially since around 2008. Uncertainty about relative power is dangerous because war, in one famous analysis, can break out as a result of a “dispute about the measurement of power.”¹¹⁷

Because war is risky and dangerous, states have an incentive to avoid war unless they feel confident of victory. The resilience of U.S. power means that challenging the United States directly is perilous for revisionist states such as China and Russia. Therefore, they seek less risky strategies for expanding their power and influence. Although the United States maintains a strong advantage in terms of comprehensive power, leaders in both China and Russia perceived that U.S. power had declined and that their own countries’ relative power had increased. As a result, they were emboldened to seek ways to assert their power and interests while avoiding a direct confrontation with the United States. The logical place for these states to engage in probing was in their own regions, where the interests of the United States were marginal and its commitment was most questionable. In these regions, both countries surmised, the U.S. response was likely to be most restrained, and their own prospects for success were highest. The goal of these probes was not merely to register disapproval of the international order, but to test U.S. resolve and, ultimately, to begin revising the international order gradually.¹¹⁸

Russia engaged in probing through its war in Georgia in 2008, its annexation of Crimea in 2014, its support for insurgents in eastern Ukraine beginning that same year, and its threats against vulnerable NATO members around the Baltic Sea. The threats to countries in Eastern Europe, by casting doubt upon U.S. commitment to these countries’ defense, threatened to drive a wedge

¹¹⁷ Geoffrey Blainey, *The Causes of War* (New York: Free Press, 1978), 114, cited in Grygiel and Mitchell, *The Unquiet Frontier*, 45.

¹¹⁸ Grygiel and Mitchell, *The Unquiet Frontier*, 46-47.

between the United States and its allies in that region. For its part, China ratcheted up its pressure on carefully selected geographical fixtures, including shoals and reefs in the Spratly and Paracel Islands, which are of vital concern to U.S. allies but of little intrinsic importance to the United States. The U.S. reluctance to go to war over such minor points on the map heightens concerns among its allies in Asia about its commitment to the region's security. Like Russia's probes in Eastern Europe, therefore, China's actions in the South China Sea threaten to drive a wedge between the United States and its allies.¹¹⁹

As China and Russia engage in probing, with the goal of establishing spheres of influence in their own regions, they act largely in parallel, rather than in concert. Neither side fully supports the other's regional ambitions. As discussed in subsequent chapters, China offered Russia a measure of diplomatic support during the 2008 war in Georgia but declined to join Russia in recognizing the sovereignty of two breakaway regions. China responded similarly to events in Ukraine six years later. Although Chinese leaders agreed with Russia that the United States and the European Union had provoked the conflict in Ukraine, they failed to provide Russia with unequivocal diplomatic support. China abstained from, but declined to join Russia in vetoing, a UN Security Council resolution condemning the impending referendum in Crimea on the peninsula's annexation by Russia, as well as a UN General Assembly resolution condemning the annexation. Russia, for its part, maintained neutrality on China's disputes in the South China Sea and the East China Sea. Although Russia and China both had ongoing territorial disputes with Japan, Russia declined China's invitation to form a common front on these disputes. Instead, Russia entertained diplomatic overtures from Japan, which sought to improve relations with Russia as a hedge against China's rise. Russia also cultivated relations with other countries embroiled in

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 56.

territorial disputes with China, including Vietnam, which purchased Russian submarines. Given both sides' unwillingness to become involved in the other's regional disputes, the risks posed by the familiar problems of entrapment and abandonment are acute and serve as a further reason that the formation of a China-Russia alliance is unlikely.

Central Asia was one region in which the two countries' regional ambitions threatened to collide. Despite predictions of an eventual clash of interests in this region, however, China-Russia relations developed smoothly during the period under study. To be sure, in the face of China's growing inroads in this region, Russia attempted to consolidate its own influence. The Eurasian Economic Union, a project that Putin promoted while preparing his return to the presidency in the fall of 2011, was partly an effort to resist China's growing influence. China's Belt and Road initiative, which Xi Jinping introduced during the fall of 2013, seemed likely to consolidate China's influence further. Whatever misgivings Russian officials had about this initiative, however, they did not express them publicly. Instead, they embarked on a diplomatic effort to reach an understanding with China, which culminated in the two countries' announcement in May 2015 that they would attempt to link the Silk Road Economic Belt, the continental component of the Belt and Road, with the Eurasian Economic Union. Russia appeared to have concluded that the potential damage from a major effort to resist China's advances in the region would exceed the likely benefits.

Although the China-Russia strategic partnership does not entail full support for each other's regional objectives, it nevertheless enhances both countries' ability to pursue these ambitions. Neither country wishes to see the other become embroiled in a major conflict with the United States. Such a conflict would place the other one in an awkward and risky diplomatic situation. Nevertheless, for both China and Russia, the existence of a controlled amount of tension

in the other's relations with the United States affords some strategic room for maneuver. A shift of U.S. strategic focus toward Asia casts further doubt upon U.S. commitments in Europe, possibly offering strategic opportunities for Russia. As discussed previously, this factor offers Russia an additional reason to sell advanced weapons systems to China. From China's perspective, ongoing tensions between the United States and Russia complicate U.S. efforts to focus strategic attention on Asia. The Ukraine crisis also strengthened China's position in the U.S.-Russia-China triangle. Russia's diplomatic and economic isolation forced it to turn to China, enhancing China's ability to secure benefits from its relationship with Russia, including contracts for advanced weapons, increased oil and gas shipments, and opportunities to invest in Russia's energy industry. China and Russia also enjoy opportunities to learn from the other's success in its efforts at probing.

The simultaneous deterioration of relations with Russia and the intensification of great-power competition with China stretches U.S. resources and weakens the country's diplomatic bargaining position. The possibility that the United States could simultaneously face crises in Europe and Asia complicates its task of exercising global leadership. As long as these processes remain under control, they enhance the ability of both China and Russia to engage in probing in their own regions. The resulting strategic room for maneuver, which enhances both countries' ability to pursue their regional ambitions in parallel, is one of the most useful benefits of their strategic partnership. Efforts to act in concert, discussed next, have been less successful in achieving concrete results.

Triangular diplomacy

The previous sections discussed ways in which China and Russia, despite acting largely in parallel rather than in concert, nevertheless benefit from their close diplomatic relationship. Moving up the ladder of cooperation, the following sections discuss ways in which the two countries cooperate to promote common objectives in international relations, albeit in a restrained way. The next two sections discuss triangular diplomacy and soft balancing, respectively. The actual extent of China-Russia cooperation, at least in its intent, lies somewhere along these rungs of the ladder of cooperation. These two concepts overlap with each other, and it is debatable which one should be considered higher on the ladder of cooperation. The answer depends on the precise goals of the leaders pursuing these strategies, as well as on the outcomes they achieve. One Chinese scholar's assessment of the role of the United States in the China-Russia relationship helps to illustrate this point. In assessing the impact of the U.S. factor, Wu Xinbo, a scholar whose specialty is the United States, offered a three-part typology. In some cases, China and Russia join hands to offset pressure from the United States. In other cases, they engage in diplomatic outreach to the other in order to gain leverage in relations with the United States. Finally, at times they also compete with each other for closer ties to the United States.¹²⁰

The first approach, in which China and Russia cooperate to oppose the United States, is equivalent to soft balancing, whether or not this effort achieves results. If it fails to achieve results, then it fails to qualify as triangular diplomacy, for reasons discussed below. In this sense, triangular diplomacy would rank higher on the ladder of cooperation than soft balancing. In the latter two approaches, the common element is that China and Russia use their relationship with the other

¹²⁰ Author's interview with Wu Xinbo, professor and director of the Center for American Studies, Fudan University, Shanghai, March 6, 2015.

primarily as a “card” to play in relations with the United States. This constitutes a lesser form of cooperation than standing in solidarity to oppose the United States, as seen in soft balancing. In this sense, triangular diplomacy stands lower on the ladder of cooperation than soft balancing. Because triangular diplomacy usually focuses on the latter two types of engagement, this section places triangular diplomacy below soft balancing on the ladder of cooperation.

The concept of the strategic triangle was in vogue in the early to mid-1970s, when the United States pursued rapprochement with China and used the resulting “China card” to obtain concessions from the Soviet Union during the course of détente.¹²¹ Donald Zagoria, during congressional testimony in 1965, defined the triangle as a pattern in which “change in the relationship of any two of the powers unavoidably affects the third.”¹²² Further developing the concept, Lowell Dittmer wrote that the existence of a strategic triangle requires that two conditions must be in effect. First, all three participants in the triangle must recognize each other’s strategic salience. Second, though the three participants need not be of equal strategic weight, each of them must be recognized by the other two as a legitimate, autonomous player. If these conditions are present, then the relationship between any two actors in the triangle will be influenced by their relationships with the third actor. This condition demonstrates why two states’ interactions must influence the behavior of the third in order to qualify as triangular diplomacy, as opposed to mere rhetorical opposition to the third state’s policies, which is sometimes the extent of alleged instances of soft balancing. The conditions that Dittmer describes were not always present during the Cold War, and the configuration of the triangle took different forms at different times.¹²³

¹²¹ Lowell Dittmer, *Sino-Soviet Normalization and Its International Implications, 1945-1990* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992), 9.

¹²² Quoted in Dittmer, *Sino-Soviet Normalization and Its International Implications*, 8 n15, 280.

¹²³ Lowell Dittmer, “The Strategic Triangle: An Elementary Game-Theoretical Analysis,” *World Politics* 33, no. 4 (July 1981): 490-491.

Using Dittmer's terms, a pattern of *ménage à trois* involves amity among all three players, a romantic triangle entails amity between one "pivot" player and two "wing" players and enmity between each of the wings, and a stable marriage forms when two of the players share amity with each other and enmity with the third.¹²⁴ During Richard Nixon's presidency, the heyday of the triangle, the United States enjoyed the pivot position in a romantic triangle.¹²⁵ The U.S. objective was not to form an alliance with China against the Soviet Union. Rather, as Henry Kissinger explained, the goal was to maximize U.S. bargaining leverage by ensuring that its options toward both were greater than their options toward each other.¹²⁶ "The hostility between China and the Soviet Union served our purposes best if we maintained closer relations with each side than they did with each other," Kissinger wrote.¹²⁷

After the demise of détente, the United States and China entered a "stable marriage" that lasted from 1976 to 1981. Deng Xiaoping's announcement that China would pursue an independent foreign policy signaled the loosening of U.S.-China relations and steps toward improvement of Sino-Soviet relations, resulting in the formation of a romantic triangle from 1981 to 1985, with China in the pivot. Gorbachev's simultaneous improvement of relations with the United States and China produced a *ménage à trois* lasting from 1986 to 1990. The end of the Cold War and collapse of the Soviet Union left the future of the triangle uncertain.¹²⁸

Initially, the days of the strategic triangle appeared to be over. Although U.S.-China relations soured following the crackdown in Tiananmen Square, the prospects for U.S.-Russia relations appeared bright, as Yeltsin's government pursued integration with the West. U.S.-Russia

¹²⁴ Ibid, 489.

¹²⁵ Dittmer, *Sino-Soviet Normalization and Its International Implications*.

¹²⁶ Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979), 165, 191-192, 712, 836.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 712.

¹²⁸ Dittmer, *Sino-Soviet Normalization and Its International Implications*.

relations soon deteriorated, however, and the possibility of a revived triangle reemerged. In this conception of the triangle, Russia, which still possessed nuclear parity with the United States, would join with China, a rising potential superpower, to balance the United States. Instead of forming an alliance, however, both countries would use their partnership to increase their own influence in relations with the United States, with which they would remain closely engaged.¹²⁹

An initial attempt to revive the triangle occurred in the 1990s. After first shunning China, Russia soon resumed efforts to cultivate relations with its large eastern neighbor. Some of its motivations were purely bilateral, including its desire to resolve border issues, control Chinese immigration, and sell weapons to China in order to sustain its domestic defense industry. Another motivation, however, was to play the “China card” as a counterweight against U.S. power.¹³⁰ Yeltsin expressed this desire clearly in 1995: “We can lean on the shoulder of China in relations with the United States. Then the West will start to treat Russia more respectfully.”¹³¹ Yeltsin sought not only to create a counterweight to U.S. power, but also to establish Russia as a bridge between China and the United States.¹³² China, which also sought ways to counterbalance U.S. power, was receptive to Russia’s diplomatic outreach. Nevertheless, neither Russia nor China was able to exploit their strategic partnership to force changes in U.S. policy on issues such as NATO expansion, arms sales to Taiwan, missile defense, or the campaign in Kosovo. Meanwhile, U.S.-China economic ties expanded rapidly.

¹²⁹ Bobo Lo, “The Russia-China-US Triangle and Its Post-Cold War Fate,” in *Eurasia’s Ascent in Energy and Geopolitics: Rivalry or Partnership for Russia, China and Central Asia?*, ed. Robert E. Bedeski and Niklas Swanström (New York: Routledge, 2012), 34.

¹³⁰ Lo, “The Russia-China-US Triangle and Its Post-Cold War Fate,” 38.

¹³¹ Цит. по Бажанов Е.П. Российско-китайские отношения на современном этапе // Актуальные проблемы международных отношений. М.: Научная книга, 2002. Т. 2. С. 419 [Quoted in Yevgeny Bazhanov, “The Contemporary Stage of Russia-China Relations,” in E.P. Bazhanov, *Current Problems of International Relations* (Moscow: Nauchnaya Kniga, 2002), Vol. 2, 419].

¹³² Lo, “The Russia-China-US Triangle and Its Post-Cold War Fate,” 38.

Despite the failure of triangular diplomacy in the 1990s, new opportunities for the triangle seemed apparent starting around 2007 and 2008. Owing to several factors, the gap in power among the three countries appeared to narrow. After years of inconclusive fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq, the United States appeared weaker than it had earlier in the decade. The war in Iraq had stimulated anti-Americanism in Europe and created a rift between the United States and several of its NATO allies. Russia had enjoyed several years of economic growth fueled by high oil and commodity prices. China's sustained economic growth continued to augment its power.¹³³ The financial crisis heightened perceptions of U.S. decline, but it also struck Russia harder than any other major world economy. China emerged from the financial crisis in relatively strong condition and began to pursue an increasingly assertive foreign policy. Once again, however, the triangle failed to emerge. The United States and Russia pursued a "reset" of relations, while prominent voices in the United States called for the formation of a "G-2" with China. The foreign policies of China and Russia revealed that relations with the United States remained both countries' priority.

Within the triangle, Russia and China pursued slightly different objectives. Russia appeared to seek the pivot position, which would allow it to seek advantage by maneuvering between the United States and China, whereas China often sought Russia's solidarity in opposing the United States.¹³⁴ The issue of missile defense was an example. China sought to maintain a united front with Russia against U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty. Putin's muted acceptance of the eventual U.S. withdrawal, which occurred during the U.S.-Russia rapprochement that followed the 2001 terrorist attacks, appeared to indicate that relations with the West remained Russia's priority.

¹³³ Lo, "The Russia-China-US Triangle and Its Post-Cold War Fate," 38-39.

¹³⁴ Rozman, *The Sino-Russian Challenge to the World Order*, 252.

The two countries' contrasting approaches to the triangle were largely a result of differences in their power trajectories. Throughout the post-Cold War period, Russia's weakness was the principal reason for the failure of triangular diplomacy to reemerge.¹³⁵ In a time of Russian weakness, Yeltsin sought to play the China card to gain leverage in relations with the United States, as his quotation above suggests, but achieved little success. Putin's main goal in foreign policy has been to avoid marginalization and to reestablish Russia as a great power. This implies that Russia would be a third "pole," along with the United States and China, in a tripolar world order. In cultivating ties with China, Putin aimed not only to counterbalance U.S. power and strengthen Russia's diplomatic bargaining position, but also to influence the way in which China wielded its growing power, which was potentially threatening to Russia.¹³⁶

China, meanwhile, focused on its rise to superpower status. Despite their country's rapid rise, Chinese leaders believed that this process would take decades. During this period, the imperative was to avoid serious international conflict that might threaten the country's accumulation of national power. Therefore, although Chinese leaders sought Russia's diplomatic support on missile defense and other issues, they were not interested in increasing coordination with Russia to an extent that would cause a serious deterioration in relations with the United States. In any case, Chinese leaders recognized that Russia played a marginal role in their country's economic development and was unlikely to provide them with more than minimal support in a potential U.S.-China confrontation.¹³⁷ Chinese leaders joined Russia's calls for multipolarity, but they, along with leading Chinese analysts, recognized the increasing likelihood that the emerging

¹³⁵ Lo, "The Russia-China-US Triangle and Its Post-Cold War Fate," 35.

¹³⁶ Alexander Lukin, "Eurasian Integration and the Clash of Values," *Survival* 56, no. 3 (2014): 54; Lo, "The Russia-China-US Triangle and Its Post-Cold War Fate," 40.

¹³⁷ Lo, "The Russia-China-US Triangle and Its Post-Cold War Fate," 41-42.

world order would be not multipolar, but bipolar.¹³⁸ In a tight bipolar environment, triangular diplomacy could not function effectively because of the third actor's marginal position.

The Ukraine crisis stimulated a further strategic convergence of China and Russia, but it tilted the relationship still further to China's advantage. Facing diplomatic isolation and Western sanctions, Russia needed China's support more than the reverse. This situation hindered Russia's ability to exploit the triangle to its benefit. The growing power imbalance in China's favor was merely a continuation of a trend that had been underway for several years. In the words of Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Fu Ying, the U.S.-China-Russia triangle had become scalene—that is, having no congruent sides.¹³⁹ The U.S.-Russia leg of the triangle featured ruptured political relations and minimal economic ties. Russia maintained strong economic ties with U.S. allies in Europe, but these ties now suffered under sanctions. The United States and China seemed poised for intensified political competition, but their economies were heavily intertwined. China and Russia enjoyed increasingly close political relations, but their economic ties remained modest, except in sectors such as arms sales and energy.

The net result was that the United States had lost the advantage that Kissinger sought and achieved during the period of détente, namely the attainment of closer relations with both of the other two countries than they enjoyed with each other.¹⁴⁰ China now occupied the pivot in the triangle. This position allowed China to reap certain benefits, enumerated in this section, without causing deep antagonism in relations with the United States or threatening its own rise to power. This did not represent a return to full-fledged triangular diplomacy, but it demonstrated that China

¹³⁸ 阎学通：《历史的惯性：未来十年的中国与世界》，中信出版社，2013年 [Yan Xuetong, *Inertia of History: China and the World in the Next Ten Years* (Beijing: Zhongxin Chubanshe, 2013)].

¹³⁹ Fu Ying, "How China Sees Russia: Beijing and Moscow Are Close, but Not Allies," *Foreign Affairs* (January/February 2016); 傅莹：《中俄关系：是盟友还是伙伴？》，《现代国际关系》，2016年第4期，第9页 [Fu Ying, "China-Russia Relations: Are They Allies or Partners?", *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* 2016 (4): 9].

¹⁴⁰ Brian G. Carlson, "China-Russia Relations and the Inertia of History," *Survival* 58, no. 3 (June/July 2016): 218.

could achieve tangible results from its management of relations within the triangle. Russia was much less successful. As the second decade of the twenty-first century neared its end, Russia country was still struggling to maneuver usefully within the triangle.

Soft balancing

An earlier section of this chapter discussed soft balancing, ongoing debates about its validity as a concept, and its potential applicability to China-Russia relations during this period. As mentioned, some scholars use the concept of soft balancing to describe efforts by a group of states that aim not to change the international balance of power, but to obtain better outcomes within the existing balance of power than they could achieve in the absence of such cooperation. This section discusses some of the examples of alleged soft balancing by China and Russia that proponents of this concept have identified.

The U.S. pursuit of national missile defense, in the view of some scholars, was an especially important issue that prompted soft balancing by China and Russia. U.S. aspirations to build national missile defense systems, Robert Pape argued, created a classic security dilemma, especially in relations with China and Russia. Both countries feared that a U.S. national missile defense project, though initially a limited system designed to intercept missiles from rogue states, eventually could expand and give the United States nuclear superiority.¹⁴¹ Despite the defensive purpose of such systems, the possibility that they could render the United States invulnerable to nuclear attack threatened to increase the U.S. capacity to take offensive action. Both China and Russia therefore viewed missile defense systems as enhancements to U.S. offensive power, which is one of the four variables in Walt's balance-of-threat theory. Both countries therefore viewed

¹⁴¹ Pape, "Soft Balancing Against the United States," 33-34.

U.S. national missile defense plans as a potential threat to their deterrent capabilities.¹⁴² As described in a later chapter, China and Russia issued a series of joint declarations and sponsored several UN resolutions denouncing U.S. missile defense plans. This issue also caused some tension in China-Russia relations, however. China was disappointed when Putin accepted U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty, which President George W. Bush announced in late 2001, with little protest. The national interests of China and Russia also diverged on this issue because China was primarily concerned about theater missile defense, whereas Russia worried more about national missile defense. However, when South Korea agreed in 2016 to the installation of the Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile defense system, provided by the United States, China and Russia opposed this decision in unison.

The Kosovo crisis of 1999, which occurred simultaneously with the pursuit of U.S. missile defense plans, also prompted cooperation by China and Russia. In the view of some scholars, these efforts constituted soft balancing. As discussed in detail in Chapter 3, both countries opposed NATO's intervention because it threatened to erode the principle of sovereignty and to offer support to secessionist movements. Both countries had their own problems with separatism, including Russia's difficulties in Chechnya and China's concerns about Taiwan, Tibet, and Xinjiang.¹⁴³ Other factors prompted more visceral reactions, including Russia's affinity for its fellow Slavs in Serbia and China's outrage over NATO's accidental bombing of the embassy in Belgrade. Their opposition to the Kosovo campaign, therefore, was based on a combination of national interests, as they perceived them, and national identities.

China and Russia used their veto power to prevent UN Security Council authorization for NATO's actions, but they failed to stop the bombing campaign, which enjoyed strong support

¹⁴² Walt, "Keeping the World 'Off Balance'," 138.

¹⁴³ T.V. Paul, "Soft Balancing in the Age of U.S. Primacy," *International Security* 30, no. 1 (2005): 60.

among NATO's European member-states. Russia also expressed its opposition by suspending participation in the Russia-NATO Founding Act and the Partnership for Peace, among other actions that severed some diplomatic relations with the West. However, Russia soon reengaged diplomatically and played a role in ending the conflict by successfully persuading Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic to accept NATO's terms. China joined Russia in calls for an end to the bombing campaign. After the embassy bombing, China suspended military exchanges and human rights dialogues with the United States. Although these instances of soft balancing failed to prevent the NATO intervention, they may have influenced the postwar settlement. Russian forces participated in the postwar peacekeeping operation, and Kosovo initially remained part of Yugoslavia.¹⁴⁴

Scholars have identified other actions by China and Russia that allegedly constituted soft balancing against the United States. In the late 1990s, Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov called for increased coordination among China, Russia, and India, though his attempts were unsuccessful. In 2001, China and Russia signed the Treaty of Good-Neighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation, which called for joint efforts to resist U.S. "hegemonism." That same year, along with four Central Asian countries, China and Russia formed the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a regional organization aiming to address security issues and promote economic development in Central Asia.¹⁴⁵ Participation by China and Russia in the Six-Party Talks on North Korea and the P5+1 negotiations on Iran put pressure on the United States to pursue less confrontational policies toward those countries over their nuclear weapons programs that it might have done otherwise.¹⁴⁶ In the view of some scholars, Russian arms sales to China were also a form

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 62-64. The latter achievement was not to last, however, as Kosovo gained independence in 2008.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, 63-64.

¹⁴⁶ Walt, "Alliances in a Unipolar World," 106.

of balancing. Even if Russia's motivations were primarily economic, these sales had the effect of strengthening China's military capabilities and therefore influenced the global balance of power.¹⁴⁷

Other examples of soft balancing might include the SCO's 2005 call for the United States to establish a timetable for the withdrawal from its military bases in Central Asia, an ongoing series of joint military exercises, and diplomatic support on issues such as the THAAD deployment.

Despite its potential usefulness for analyzing foreign policy behaviors that fall short of traditional great-power balancing, analyses that employ the concept of soft balancing suffer from at least two defects, one analytical, the other conceptual. The analytical defect concerns the factors that allegedly stimulate soft balancing. Both Pape and Walt argued that unilateralism in U.S. foreign policy, rather than unipolarity itself, was the primary driver of soft balancing by China and Russia.¹⁴⁸ Yet following the departure from office of the George W. Bush administration, known for its unilateralism, and the transition to office of Barack Obama, who pursued multilateralism, the foreign policies of both China and Russia became increasingly assertive. Rather than U.S. unilateralism, therefore, it appeared that changes in relative power, including an improvement in Russia's position, the rise of China, and the perception of U.S. decline following the financial crisis, were the main spurs to the increased foreign policy assertiveness by China and Russia. Moreover, the failure of the U.S.-Russia reset, as well as China's increasing assertiveness in response to gestures of goodwill from the new Obama administration, suggest that national identity gaps severely complicated efforts to improve relations through adjustments in U.S. foreign policy.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ Kai He and Huiyun Feng, "If Not Soft Balancing, Then What?", 367-370.

¹⁴⁸ Pape, "Soft Balancing Against the United States," especially 21-35; Walt, "Keeping the World 'Off Balance'," 121-154.

¹⁴⁹ Rozman, *The Sino-Russian Challenge to the World Order*, 252.

The second problem with soft balancing is conceptual. If soft balancing is defined as cooperative efforts by states to achieve more favorable outcomes in the existing structure of the international system than they could achieve in the absence of such cooperation, then the actions by China and Russia described above meet this description. China and Russia engage in various forms of cooperation to resist U.S. foreign policy objectives, and analysts need concepts and frameworks with which to analyze these efforts. However, the inclusion of the term “balancing” in this conceptual formulation suggests that the behavior in question differs in degree, not in kind, from traditional hard balancing. If this is true, then the term “soft balancing” should apply only to cases in which other countries act to increase constraints on, or shift power against, the United States. In reality, alleged examples of soft balancing are often indistinguishable from mere policy disputes.¹⁵⁰

In the cases described above, China and Russia pursued the limited objective of seeking to improve a diplomatic outcome, rather than trying to balance the United States. Moreover, they often failed to achieve even this limited objective. On a series of issues, China and Russia failed to block or dissuade the United States from taking actions that they opposed.¹⁵¹ The China-Russia strategic partnership consists largely of efforts by the two countries to engage in either triangular diplomacy or soft balancing, but their record of success is limited.

¹⁵⁰ Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, “Hard Times for Soft Balancing,” *International Security* 30, no. 1 (Summer 2005): 75-82.

¹⁵¹ Bobo Lo, *A Wary Embrace: What the China-Russia Relationship Means for the World* (Sydney: Penguin Random House Australia, 2017).

Non-alliance

Reaching the top of the ladder, a military-political alliance would be the highest form of collaboration. For reasons discussed above at length, China and Russia refrained from forming an alliance during this period. The writings of Russian and Chinese scholars reflect many of the theoretical arguments discussed above. Alexander Lukin, a leading China specialist in Russia, argued that both countries recognized the importance of cooperation with the West for their own internal development and for raising their international profiles.¹⁵² For this reason, China and Russia would form an alliance against the United States only if they came to perceive the threat from the United States as greater than the cost of refusing to cooperate with the United States.¹⁵³ One of China's leading international relations theorists, Yan Xuetong, called for China and Russia to form an alliance, but his argument garnered little support within China's government or foreign policy circles.¹⁵⁴ Yan argued that the structure of the international system was gradually becoming bipolar as China gained superpower status. Under these circumstances, China needed allies, and it had no better option than Russia.¹⁵⁵ Most Chinese experts on Russia disagreed, arguing that an alliance with Russia would be unnecessary, unfeasible, and detrimental to China's interests.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² Лукин А.В. Россия и Китай сегодня и завтра // Россия и Китай: четыре века взаимодействия—история, Современное состояние и перспективы развития российско-китайских отношений / Под ред. А.В. Лукина. М.: Весь мир, 2013. С. 630 [A.V. Lukin, "Russia and China Today and Tomorrow," in *Russia and China: Four Centuries of Interaction—History, Contemporary Conditions, and Prospects for the Development of Russia-China Relations*, ed. A.V. Lukin (Moscow: Ves' Mir, 2013), 630].

¹⁵³ Лукин А.В. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. Россия и Китай после распада СССР // Россия и Китай: четыре века взаимодействия—история, Современное состояние и перспективы развития российско-китайских отношений / Под ред. А.В. Лукина. М.: Весь мир, 2013. С. 332 [A.V. Lukin, "From Normalization to Strategic Partnership: Russia and China After the Collapse of the USSR," in *Russia and China: Four Centuries of Interaction—History, Contemporary Conditions, and Prospects for the Development of Russia-China Relations*, ed. A.V. Lukin (Moscow: Ves' Mir, 2013), 332].

¹⁵⁴ Carlson, "China-Russia Relations and the Inertia of History," 213-222.

¹⁵⁵ 阎学通: 《俄罗斯可靠吗?》, 《国际经济评论》2012年,第3期 [Yan Xuetong, "Is Russia Reliable?" *Guoji Jingji Pinglun*, 2012 (3): 21-25]; 阎学通: 《历史的惯性: 未来十年的中国与世界》 [Yan Xuetong, *Inertia of History*].

¹⁵⁶ 赵华胜: 《中俄结盟》为何缺乏现实可行性》, 《人民论坛》, 2013年7月24日 [Zhao Huasheng, "Why a 'China-Russia Alliance' Lacks Realistic Feasibility," *Renmin Luntan*, July 24, 2013],

Outline of the Empirical Study

The following chapters constitute an empirical study of China-Russia relations, arranged in chronological order. For the most part, the relationship has developed steadily, with few sharp turning points or moments of discontinuity. Dividing the relationship into phases is therefore a subjective process. The chapters in this study cover periods that were bookended by major events in world politics that led to progress, or at least changes, in the China-Russia relationship. Three of the chapters begin with points (1991, 2001, 2009) at which Russia sought to improve relations with the United States, causing some consternation in China, before a renewed downturn in U.S.-Russia relations led Russia to turn once again to China.

Chapter 2 covers the period from the breakup of the Soviet Union until the formation of the China-Russia strategic partnership (1991-1996). At the time of the Soviet Union's collapse, U.S.-China relations still suffered from the effects of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre. In the early post-Soviet period, Russia initially charted a pro-Western course but eventually grew disillusioned, largely because of the failure of economic reform and Russian opposition to NATO expansion. Partly because of these trends, China and Russia grew closer to each other, declaring that they were "friendly countries" by December 1992, forming a "constructive partnership" by 1994, and forging a "strategic partnership" by 1996.

Chapter 3 covers developments through the signing of the Treaty of Good-Neighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation (1996-2001). During this stage, despite some initial hesitation, China-

<http://www.rmlt.com.cn/2013/0724/91927.shtml>; 姜毅: 《不靠谱的‘中俄结盟’说》, 《世界知识》, 2012 年第 5 期, 第 52-53 页 [Jiang Yi, "Irresponsible Talk of 'China and Russia Forming an Alliance,'" *Shijie Zhishi* 2012 (5): 52-53].

Russia relations continued to advance. In their joint declarations, the two countries continually expressed their support for the formation of a multipolar world. The two countries shared similar views on a host of international issues, including opposition to NATO expansion, U.S. missile defense programs, and U.S. criticism of other countries' human rights records. The 1999 Kosovo crisis gave considerable impetus to China-Russia relations.¹⁵⁷ This stage culminated in the 2001 signing of the Treaty of Good-Neighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation between China and Russia and the formation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Chapter 4 covers the period between the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and the outbreak of the global financial crisis in the fall of 2008. Following the terrorist attacks, Russia once again sought improved relations with the United States. Russia accepted the establishment of U.S. military bases in Central Asia to support operations in Afghanistan and acquiesced in the U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty. Both decisions caused discomfort in China, especially because China's leaders believed that Russian leaders had failed to consult them adequately. However, the Iraq war and especially the "color revolutions" in the post-Soviet region helped to end the U.S.-Russia honeymoon and drove China and Russia closer together. This trend culminated in July 2005 with the SCO's declaration that foreign countries maintaining military bases in Central Asia should establish a timetable for their withdrawal. That same summer, China and Russia held their first joint military exercises, Peace Mission 2005.

In 2007, Russian President Vladimir Putin harshly criticized U.S. foreign policy during a speech in Munich. China was somewhat hesitant in responding to Putin's calls for greater solidarity

¹⁵⁷ 李静杰：《中俄战略协作伙伴关系及其美国因素》，《东欧中亚研究》，2000年第3期，第3-14页 [Li Jingjie, "China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations and the American Factor," *Dongou Zhongya Yanjiu* 2000 (3): 3-14]; 吴大辉：《中俄战略协作伙伴关系：十年实践的历史考察》，《俄罗斯中亚东欧研究》2006年第3期，第1-9页 [Wu Dahui, "China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations: Historical Observations on Ten Years of Practice," *Eluosi Zhongya Dongou Yanjiu* 2006 (3): 1-9]; Лукин А.В. Россия и Китай сегодня и завтра. С. 629 [Lukin, "Russia and China Today and Tomorrow," 629].

in opposing the West, largely because U.S.-China relations were developing on a satisfactory path during this period. U.S.-Russia relations reached a new low in August 2008, when Russia defeated Georgia in a brief war. This episode revealed differences in Russian and Chinese perspectives, however, as China declined to support Russia's recognition of the sovereignty of two breakaway republics in Georgia.

Chapter 5 covers developments from the financial crisis through the end of 2016. Shortly after the war in Georgia ended, the global financial crisis erupted. Because China emerged from the crisis relatively unscathed while Western economies, as well as Russia's, were hard-hit, China appeared to draw the conclusion that it could take more risks in challenging U.S. foreign policy than it had previously. Over the next few years, China appeared to adopt an increasingly assertive posture in its territorial disputes in the South China Sea and the East China Sea, leading to increased tensions with the United States and with other Asian countries, including some U.S. allies. For at least the third time since the end of the Cold War, Russia made a concerted effort to improve relations with the United States, though in this case the initiative came from the United States. Despite some significant accomplishments as part of the "reset" in U.S.-Russian relations, a series of issues contributed to yet another downturn in U.S.-Russia relations—most dramatically, the crisis in Ukraine that began to build in 2013 and erupted early the following year. In the wake of this crisis, Russia tacked in the direction of China.

China partially shared Russia's assessment of the Ukraine crisis, blaming the West for assisting the destabilization of Ukraine's government. However, China declined to endorse Russia's annexation of Crimea. Russia's policy could not fail to cause concern for China, which had to worry about the implications for Taiwan, Xinjiang, and Tibet. Less than three months after the annexation of Crimea, China and Russia signed a major gas deal following years of

negotiations. Many analysts attributed this agreement to the diplomatic isolation and economic pressure that Russia experienced as a result of the Ukraine crisis. The terms of the deal reportedly were heavily in China's favor, suggesting that the China-Russia relationship had become increasingly imbalanced. By the end of 2016, China-Russia relations were closer and healthier than ever before, but China's growth in relative power raised questions about the durability of the strategic partnership. Chapter 4 also features a detailed analysis of debates in both China and Russia about relations with the other country, drawing upon sources in both languages.

Chapter 2

From the Breakup of the Soviet Union to Strategic Partnership: 1991-1996

The breakup of the Soviet Union in December 1991 produced an almost entirely peaceful change in the structure of the international system, a rare event in world history. The change, however, was no less momentous for being peaceful. Almost in an instant, the bipolar international order that had existed for more than four decades gave way to a new era of unipolarity and U.S. primacy. Commentators around the world debated how long this new unipolar structure would last, but world leaders had to face the new reality immediately. The new structure of the international system was certain to have profound implications for the world's major powers, including not only the former superpower antagonists—the United States and the Russian Federation, the Soviet Union's successor state—but also China. Unipolarity promised to alter the dynamics of relations within the Washington-Moscow-Beijing triangle, which had been a notable feature of the Cold War.

The Legacy of the Cold War and the Transformation of the International System

The U.S.-Soviet confrontation had defined the Cold War, but China's alignment provided an important subtext.¹ In 1950, united by communist ideology and a shared perception of U.S. hostility, the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China forged a security alliance, which grew stronger after the Korean War erupted later that year. As the 1950s progressed, however, disputes arose over ideological leadership of the Communist bloc and the Soviet Union's

¹ Lowell Dittmer, *Sino-Soviet Normalization and Its International Implications, 1945-1990* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992), 147-255.

unwillingness to support China in crises over Taiwan. The Soviet Union considered Chinese leader Mao Zedong's behavior in these crises to be reckless, and it feared being drawn into a confrontation with the United States that risked nuclear escalation. The Sino-Soviet split grew deeper throughout the 1960s, but lingering hostility in U.S.-China relations delayed a rapprochement between Washington and Beijing until the end of the decade. In 1969, the eruption of Sino-Soviet border clashes, followed by Soviet nuclear threats against China, finally provided an opportunity for President Richard Nixon and his national security adviser, Henry Kissinger, to seek an opening to China.²

During the subsequent period, which was the apex of Cold War triangular diplomacy, the United States sought to achieve closer relations with both the Soviet Union and China than they maintained with each other.³ The United States also used its improved relations with China to exert pressure on the Soviet Union to make concessions. The period of U.S.-Soviet détente, which was partly a product of this triangular diplomacy, lasted until the mid-1970s, after which China, perceiving a heightened military threat from the Soviet Union, entered into a quasi-alliance with the United States. In May 1982, shortly before his death, Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev called

² On the Sino-Soviet border clashes is extensive, see Thomas W. Robinson, *The Sino-Soviet Border Dispute: Background, Development, and the March 1969 Clashes* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND), RM-6171-PR, August 1970; Thomas W. Robinson, "The Sino-Soviet Border Conflict," in *Diplomacy of Power: Soviet Armed Forces as a Political Instrument*, ed. Stephen S. Kaplan (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1981), 265-313; Thomas W. Robinson "China Confronts the Soviet Union: Warfare and Diplomacy on China's Inner Asian Frontiers," in *The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 15, The People's Republic, Part 2: Revolutions within the Chinese Revolution 1966-82*, ed. Roderick MacFarquhar and John K. Fairbank (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Richard Wich, *Sino-Soviet Crisis Politics: A Study of Political Change and Communication* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980); and Yang Kuisong, "The Sino-Soviet Border Clash of 1969: From Zhenbao Island to Sino-American Rapprochement," *Cold War History* 1, no. 1 (August 2000): 21-52. On the nuclear threats, See Henry Kissinger, *The White House Years* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1979), p. 183; "Авантюристический курс Пекина, Правда, 28 августа 1969 г. С. 2 ["The Adventuristic Course of Beijing," *Pravda*, Aug. 28, 1969, 2]; Raymond L. Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan*. (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1994), 228-242; Robinson, "The Sino-Soviet Border Conflict," 281; Harry Gelman, *The Soviet Far East Buildup and Soviet Risk-Taking Against China* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND) R-2943-AF, August 1982, 37-38; and Allen S. Whiting, Document 9, in "The Sino-Soviet Border Conflict, 1969: U.S. Reactions and Diplomatic Maneuvers," A National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book, ed. William Burr, National Security Archive, June 12, 2001. <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB49/#docs>

³ Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), 191-192, 712, 836.

for improved relations with China. In September of that same year, during his report to the 12th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, Deng Xiaoping announced that his country would distance itself from the United States and pursue an independent foreign policy. Deng perceived that the Soviet military threat had receded, and he was disappointed that the normalization of U.S.-China relations had not reduced U.S. support for Taiwan.

After assuming power in 1985, the new Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, introduced “new thinking” in foreign policy and ended the Cold War confrontation with the United States. By 1989, he also achieved normalization of relations with China by addressing China’s “three obstacles” to improved relations. China had demanded that the Soviet Union withdraw forces from Afghanistan, insist on Vietnam’s withdrawal of forces from Cambodia, and achieve demilitarization along China’s borders. Sino-Soviet rapprochement became official during Gorbachev’s visit to Beijing in May 1989. This visit coincided with the rise of pro-democracy demonstrations in Tiananmen Square, which the Chinese authorities suppressed in a bloody crackdown on the night of June 3-4, 1989. By the end of that year, the Berlin Wall fell and the Soviet satellite states in Central and Eastern Europe crumbled. Two years later, the Soviet Union itself dissolved.⁴ These events, which occurred so soon after China had laid to rest three decades of hostility with its former communist ally, caused profound concern among Chinese leaders, who now feared international isolation.⁵

⁴ Dittmer, *Sino-Soviet Normalization and Its International Implications*, 147-255.

⁵ 杨闯, 高飞, 冯玉军著: 《百年中俄关系》, 北京: 世界知识出版社, 2006 年版, 第 304 页 [Yang Chuang, Gao Fei, Feng Yujun, eds., *One Hundred Years of China-Russia Relations* (Beijing: Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 2006), 304]; Лукин А.В. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. Россия и Китай после распада СССР // Россия и Китай: четыре века взаимодействия—история, Современное состояние и перспективы развития российско-китайских отношений / Под ред. А.В. Лукина. М.: Весь мир, 2013. С. 302-303 [A.V. Lukin, “From Normalization to Strategic Partnership. Russia and China After the Collapse of the USSR,” in *Russia and China: Four Centuries of Interaction—History, Contemporary Conditions, and Prospects for the Development of Russia-China Relations*, ed. A.V. Lukin (Moscow: Ves’ Mir, 2013), 302-303]; Gilbert Rozman, “Sino-Russian Relations: Mutual Assessments and Predictions,” in *Rapprochement or Rivalry? Russia-China Relations in a Changing Asia*, ed. Sherman W. Garnett (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2000), 153.

In a bipolar world, according to Kenneth Waltz's neorealist theory, only the two superpowers have a significant impact on the international balance of power. Third parties cannot change this balance by abandoning an ally or switching allegiances. Therefore, although each superpower in turn "lost" China during the Cold War, the effect of China's shifting alignments on the balance of power was minimal, or so Waltz argued in 1979.⁶ Other analysts agreed with this assessment, arguing that triangular diplomacy exerted a meaningful impact on the Cold War for only a few years after Nixon's visit to China in 1972, and that its influence even during this period was limited.⁷

By contrast, Henry Kissinger, the architect of triangular diplomacy in the early 1970s, writing after the end of the Cold War, argued that the U.S. opening to China contributed to the "difficult, perhaps insurmountable, set of problems" that Gorbachev faced upon assuming power. At that time, the Soviet Union's only remaining allies were its satellite states in Central and Eastern Europe, which were mostly a burden requiring coercive control. Meanwhile, nearly all of the world's industrialized countries were aligned against the Soviet Union, and its "erstwhile ally, China, had for all practical purposes joined the opposing camp."⁸ U.S.-China cooperation helped to thwart Soviet objectives in Afghanistan and Indochina, which meant that China and the United States were "chopping off" Soviet fingers, as Deng had described the strategy to President Jimmy Carter a few years earlier.⁹ In this view, the U.S.-China rapprochement added to the mounting strains on the Soviet Union during its final decade, thus contributing to the end of the Cold War.

⁶ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1979), 169.

⁷ See for example Bobo Lo, "The Russia-China-US Triangle and Its Post-Cold War Fate," in Robert E. Bedeski and Niklas Swanström, *Eurasia's Ascent in Energy and Geopolitics: Rivalry or Partnership for Russia, China and Central Asia?* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 37-38.

⁸ Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 787.

⁹ Henry Kissinger, *On China* (New York: Penguin, 2011), 388.

Whatever the significance of China's role during the Cold War, the bipolar order imposed important constraints on the major powers. This was certainly true of the United States and the Soviet Union, for which the superpower rivalry was the defining factor in foreign policy. Bipolarity's constraints were especially tight for China, which was far less powerful than either the United States or the Soviet Union and at various times perceived both as security threats. Structural realism therefore offers part of the explanation for China's foreign policy during the Cold War.¹⁰

The emergence of unipolarity drastically altered the structural constraints that the United States, Russia, and China faced. The United States, having successfully achieved containment of the Soviet Union during the Cold War, now emerged in the wake of the Soviet collapse as the world's only superpower, with all of the opportunities and burdens that its new primacy entailed. To be sure, the advent of unipolarity resulted from the collapse of the Soviet Union, not from an increase in the absolute power that the United States possessed. From the perspective of power cycle theory, the relative power of the United States had peaked sometime in the second half of the 1960s and entered a period of relative decline. Despite its relative decline, which seemed likely to unfold over a period of several decades, the United States remained in a strong position.¹¹ For some time to come, the United States would remain, by a significant margin, the strongest country in the world. Commentators debated how the United States should respond to its "unipolar moment."¹²

¹⁰ Avery Goldstein, "Structural Realism and China's Foreign Policy: Much (But Never All) of the Story," in *Perspectives on Structural Realism*, ed. Andrew K. Hanami, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 120-121.

¹¹ Charles F. Doran, *Systems in Crisis: New Imperatives of High Politics at Century's End* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Charles F. Doran, "Economics, Philosophy of History, and the 'Single Dynamic' of Power Cycle Theory: Expectations, Competition, and Statecraft," *International Political Science Review* 24, no. 1 (2003): 13-49.

¹² Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment," *Foreign Affairs*, 70, no. 1 (1990/1991): 23-33.

The newly independent Russian Federation had experienced the threefold collapse of single-party communist rule, the command economy, and the empire. The loss of the non-Russian Soviet republics meant that Russia's territory was now smaller than at any time since the seventeenth century. In the wake of its loss of superpower status, Russia now engaged in renewed debate about its national identity and its proper position between West and East. From the perspective of power cycle theory, Russia's decline in relative power was precipitous to an extent that was historically unprecedented.¹³

China, meanwhile, which only a few years earlier had charted an independent course in foreign policy and had recently enjoyed good relations with both the United States and the Soviet Union, now faced renewed uncertainty. The improvement of China's relations with the Soviet Union during the 1980s had removed some of the rationale for close relations with the United States, and now the Soviet Union had disappeared entirely. Disagreements over Taiwan remained a constant source of irritation in relations with the United States, and the relationship had deteriorated sharply following the Tiananmen Square crackdown. Now China faced the additional challenge of a U.S.-dominated, unipolar international order. The Chinese Communist Party, having observed the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and its former satellite states, feared that the United States sought communism's demise in China as well. At the same time, the high rates of economic growth that China had enjoyed for more than a decade, inaugurated by Deng's reforms in the late 1970s, launched China on an impressive rise. According to power cycle theory, China entered a period in which its relative power was growing at an accelerating rate. This process was likely to last for decades, but observers began to discern the prospect of China's eventual emergence as a peer competitor to the United States.

¹³ Doran, *Systems in Crisis*; Doran, "Economics, Philosophy of History, and the 'Single Dynamic' of Power Cycle Theory: Expectations, Competition, and Statecraft," 13-49.

These momentous changes promised a reconfiguration of the U.S.-Russia-China triangle. Both Russia and China would have to adjust their relations with the United States in the new unipolar order. These adjustments, in turn, would have a significant impact on the new relationship that China and Russia would forge with each other.

This chapter examines the first period in the development of China-Russia relations in the post-Soviet era, from the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991 to the forging of a “strategic partnership” in 1996. During this initial stage, China and Russia adjusted to the new unipolar structure of the international system. As throughout the period that is the focus of this study, unipolarity imposed constraints on both China and Russia from late 1991 to 1996 and therefore explains some aspects of their relationship during this period. In particular, the U.S. preponderance of power encouraged China and Russia to strengthen their relationship in order to offset U.S. primacy at least partially. It also rendered traditional balance of power politics ineffective, however, because a China-Russia alliance could not match the power of the United States. The unipolar structure of the international system therefore set the broad parameters for China-Russia relations during the post-Soviet era.

In order to analyze the ebb and flow of this relationship, however, analysts should examine a variety of other factors as well, including changes in relative power and the formation of national identities. Despite the system’s unipolarity during this period, changes in relative power occurred constantly. Leaders in both China and Russia viewed power in dynamic terms, attempting to anticipate trends in relative power that would allow them, eventually, to exert increased influence in international affairs. The United States undoubtedly played an important role during this period in the evolution of Russia-China relations. Russia’s foreign policy, however, was not purely a response to events in relations with the United States, but also reflected domestic politics and

debates over national identity. For China, driving factors included not only specific issues that caused tension in relations with the United States, but also China's evolving grand strategy for pursuing its rise to power and its own conceptions of national identity. This chapter analyzes such factors in detail.

China consistently sought to strengthen relations with Russia throughout the period from 1991 to 1996. Part of its motivation lay at the bilateral level. After decades of hostile relations with the Soviet Union, which ended only during Gorbachev's tenure, Chinese leaders welcomed the security and economic benefits of a stable, secure northern border. The new structure of the international system, however, was also an important consideration. China's interest in improved relations with Russia grew throughout this period as tensions in U.S.-China relations mounted, especially over Taiwan and the strengthening of the U.S.-Japan security alliance. China invested in its own military capabilities and sought to improve relations with other countries, including Russia, that potentially shared China's concerns about U.S. power.¹⁴

For a variety of reasons, China did not seek an alliance with Russia. Simply put, the costs would have exceeded the benefits. Such an alliance would have pitted China against the military dominance of the United States while risking China's access to the global markets upon which its economic growth, and thus its growth in national power, depended. Moreover, the formation of an alliance with Russia would have been insufficient to match the power of the United States. Nevertheless, China sought to strengthen relations with Russia in order to provide at least a modest counterweight to U.S. power. At a minimum, China sought to avoid an outcome in which Russia would join the West and act contrary to China's interests. Cultivating relations with Russia served as insurance against such an outcome, which would have left China isolated on the international

¹⁴ Goldstein, "Structural Realism and China's Foreign Policy," 135-136.

stage. It also provided other benefits that contributed to China's growing power, including imported Russian weapons. After 1992, confident that their regime had survived the upheavals of the communist world, China's leaders grew more assertive over Taiwan and South China Sea disputes. This assertiveness lasted until 1996, when China adopted a strategy of greater international restraint that lasted for more than a decade.

Russia's policies toward China evolved in stages during this initial period. During the first several months following the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991, Russia emphasized relations with the West and viewed China warily. By mid-1992, recognizing the importance of friendly bilateral relations with its large neighbor, Russia invigorated its diplomacy toward China. At this stage, bilateral issues were its main consideration. Domestic politics also played an important role, as the government's liberal reforms and pro-Western foreign policy came under attack from domestic critics. Russia's domestic politics during this period featured a sharp dispute over the country's post-Soviet identity.¹⁵ By the end of 1992, China and Russia declared themselves "friendly countries."

During 1993 and 1994, as the United States first contemplated and then actively embraced the policy of NATO expansion, Russia sought deeper relations with China, including cooperation on international issues. China and Russia upgraded their relations to a "constructive partnership" in September 1994. During 1995 and 1996, Russia pursued further strengthening of relations with China. By this stage, NATO expansion was inevitable. As the 1996 Russian presidential election approached, domestic politics continued to exert influence. Facing a tough re-election campaign and continued criticism of his foreign policy, Russian President Boris Yeltsin sought to improve

¹⁵ James H. Billington, *Russia in Search of Itself* (Washington, DC, and Baltimore: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 44, 48. Cited in Gilbert Rozman, *The Sino-Russian Challenge to the World Order: National Identities, Bilateral Relations, and East Versus West in the 2010s* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2014), 105, 284 n5.

relations with China in order to bring greater balance to his foreign policy. Yeltsin declined to seek an alliance with China. Like China, Russia needed to maintain access to Western capital and technology in order to achieve modernization. Rather, Yeltsin sought to improve relations with China in order to increase Russia's leverage in relations with the West and to enhance the country's capacity to act independently on the world stage. At his suggestion, China and Russia formed a "strategic partnership" in April 1996. For Russia, therefore, concerns about the U.S. preponderance of power in the new unipolar structure of the international system were not major considerations immediately after the Soviet Union's collapse, but they became more prominent as the 1990s progressed.

Laying the Foundation for Friendly Relations (1991-1992)

The new Russia's turn to the West

Under Yeltsin's leadership, the newly independent Russian Federation initially pursued a staunchly pro-Western foreign policy. The goal was to integrate Russia fully into the West and its institutions.¹⁶ The early Russian democrats believed that close relations with China could hinder the pursuit of Russia's true interests, which lay in integration with the Western democracies. They also suspected that communist rule in China might not last much longer.¹⁷ By mid-1992, recognizing the importance of stable, friendly relations with its large neighbor, Russia adjusted its policy. During the second half of that year, China and Russia laid the groundwork for their

¹⁶ Andrei P. Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity*, Third Edition (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 57-94.

¹⁷ Бажанов Е.П. Российско-китайские отношения на современном этапе // Актуальные проблемы международных отношений. М.: Научная книга, 2002. Т. 2. С. 424-425 [Yevgeny Bazhanov, "The Contemporary Stage of Russia-China Relations," in E.P. Bazhanov, *Current Problems of International Relations* (Moscow: Nauchnaya Kniga, 2002), Vol. 2, 424-425].

relationship in the post-Soviet era. These efforts culminated in Yeltsin's first official visit to Beijing in December, when China and Russia declared themselves "friendly countries."

Yeltsin, who was elected president of the Russian Republic in June 1991, continued to hold the presidency of the Russian Federation. He filled his government with pro-Western liberals who sought to enact market reforms, which would ease Russia's Western integration. These reformers also hoped that the West would provide large-scale economic assistance to support Russia's economic transformation.¹⁸ In the fall of 1991, Yeltsin appointed Yegor Gaidar as deputy prime minister in charge of economic reform. Earlier, in the summer of 1990, Yeltsin had named Andrei Kozyrev, a mid-level diplomat in the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as Russian foreign minister. Both Gaidar and Kozyrev continued to hold these positions in the Russian Federation following independence in December 1991.

For the Yeltsin administration and its intellectual supporters, Russia's vulnerability to U.S. power in the new unipolar order was not a major concern. In January 1992, Yeltsin declared that he saw the United States as an ally.¹⁹ An article published in 1992 by four scholars at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO), which the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs administers, sought to provide intellectual foundations for Yeltsin's early tilt toward the West.²⁰ The authors recognized that the bipolar world had ended, but they rejected the notion that the world had become unipolar or that multipolarity was emerging. Instead, the division between an

¹⁸ Andrew Kuchins, "Russian Perspectives on China: Strategic Ambivalence," in *The Future of China-Russia Relations*, James Bellacqua, ed., (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2010), 38.

¹⁹ Nikolas K. Gvosdev and Christopher Marsh, *Russian Foreign Policy: Interests, Vectors, and Sectors* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2014), 79.

²⁰ Загорский А., Злобин А., Солодовник С., Хрусталеv М. Россия в новом мире // *Международная Жизнь*, № 5, 1992, С. 5-13. For an English-language version of this article, see Andrei Zagorskiy, Anatoli Zlobin, Sergey Solodovnik, and Mark Khrustalev, "Russia in a New World," *International Affairs*, 7 (1992): 3-11. For an analysis of this article, see Лукин А.В. Медведь наблюдает за драконом. Образ Китая в России в XVII—XXI веках. Москва: Восток-Запад: АСТ, 2007, С. 397-398. The English-language version of this book is Alexander Lukin, *The Bear Watches the Dragon: Russia's Perceptions of China and the Evolution of Russian-Chinese Relations Since the Eighteenth Century*. Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2003.

advanced, interconnected core and a lagging periphery would define the new structure of the international system.²¹ As the article stated: “We see the fundamental foreign policy interest of Russia in the creation of favorable external conditions for its gradual shift from the periphery to the center of world development, which presupposes the priority development of interaction and cooperation with the leading states of the world, above all with the USA, the EU, and Japan, and in the long term, entry into the ‘Group of Seven’ most developed countries.”²² In these authors’ view, China was irrelevant to this process or possibly even a hindrance. China’s future development, they asserted, was difficult to predict and might lead to instability. Either a cooperative China or an expansionist China could emerge.²³ Meanwhile, the notion that Russia could play a special role as a cultural and economic “bridge” between Europe and Asia, they argued, was an “illusion.”²⁴

This article closely reflected the foreign policy views of Kozyrev, Gaidar, and other Russian liberals. In August 1991, at a rally to celebrate the victory over that month’s attempted hardline Communist coup, Kozyrev declared that the Western democracies were the natural allies of democratic Russia.²⁵ Gaidar not only agreed that Russia should pursue a pro-Western foreign policy, but also viewed China as a potential threat. In 1995, several years after leaving office, Gaidar argued that China was unlikely to become a stable, prosperous market democracy. As a “poor, undemocratic” country in the East, China was more likely to threaten Russia, especially

²¹ Загорский, Злобин, Солодовник, Хрусталеv. Россия в новом мире. С. 7-8; Zagorskiy, Zlobin, Solodovnik, Khrustalev, “Russia in a New World,” 5-6.

²² Ibid, 12. Author’s translation. For an English-language version of this article, see Zagorskiy, Zlobin, Solodovnik, Khrustalev, “Russia in a New World,” 3-11. The passage quoted here appears on page 10 with a slightly different translation.

²³ Загорский, Злобин, Солодовник, Хрусталеv. Россия в новом мире. С. 12; Zagorskiy, Zlobin, Solodovnik, Khrustalev, “Russia in a New World,” 10.

²⁴ Ibid, 11.

²⁵ Козырев А.В. Преображение. М.: Международные отношения, 1995. С. 211 [Kozyrev A.V., *Transformation* (Moscow: International relations, 1995), 211]. Цит. по: Лукин. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 299 [Lukin, “From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 299].

given the demographic imbalance in China's favor along the eastern China-Russia border. Gaidar favored closer relations with Japan, even if this required the return of the disputed Kuril Islands, and a military buildup in Siberia and the Russian Far East to counter a potential threat from China.²⁶ Other Russian liberals held similar views. Alexei Arbatov, a security expert and member of the liberal Yabloko party who won election to the Russian Duma in 1993, argued that China could pose a threat to Russia in the future. Large-scale deliveries of advanced weapons and military technologies to China, he argued, were "naive" and "dangerous."²⁷ Given the prevalence of such views toward China among Russia's leadership, as well as Chinese leaders' inclination to blame Yeltsin for the collapse of the Soviet Union and to criticize his pro-Western orientation, the gap between the two countries' national identities reached a peak in 1992.²⁸

Soon, however, competing voices in Russian politics pushed for a Eurasianist alternative to the Yeltsin administration's Westernizing foreign policy. Some of this disagreement, including dissenting views on relations with China, existed within the Russian liberal camp itself. This divide was apparent in contrasting English-language articles written for Western audiences, one by Kozyrev and another by Vladimir Lukin, who served as the Russian Federation's first ambassador to the United States in 1992-1993 before becoming a founding member of Yabloko and winning election to the Duma.²⁹ Although Kozyrev wrote that he saw prospects for good relations with

²⁶ Гайдар Е. Т. Россия XXI века: Не мировой жандарм, а форпост демократии в Евразии // Известия. — 1995. — 18 мая. — С. 4 [Y.T. Gaidar, "Russia of the 21st century: Not a world gendarme, but an outpost of democracy in Eurasia," *Izvestia*, May 18, 1995]. Цит. по: Лукин А.В. Медведь наблюдает за драконом. С. 398-399 [Cited in Lukin, *The Bear Watches the Dragon*, 398-399].

²⁷ Арбатов А. Г. Россия: национальная безопасность в 90-е годы // Мировая экономика и международные отношения. — 1994. — № 8-9. — С. 15 [Alexei Arbatov, "Russia: National Security in the 1990s," *World Economics and International Relations*, 1994 (8-9): 15]. Цит. по: Лукин. Медведь наблюдает за драконом. С. 399-400 [Lukin, *The Bear Watches the Dragon*, 399-400].

²⁸ Gilbert Rozman, *The Sino-Russian Challenge to the World Order: National Identities, Bilateral Relations, and East Versus West in the 2010s* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2014), 243.

²⁹ Andrew Kuchins notes these contrasting articles. See Kuchins, "Russian Perspectives on China," 38.

China, his article reiterated that integration into the West was Russia's priority.³⁰ Lukin agreed that a democratic Russia should join the "civilized democratic community," but he also argued that Russia's geographical location in both Europe and Asia largely determined its national interests. He issued a stark warning: "Any attempts to force Russia solely into either Asia or Europe are ultimately futile and dangerous. Not only would they cause a serious geopolitical imbalance, but they would also undermine the historically established social and political equilibrium within Russia."³¹

Such arguments stressing the need for East-West balance in Russia's foreign policy gained traction during 1992. This was a result of both domestic political factors and of Yeltsin's adjustment of his own views. The economic recession that Russia endured during this period weakened Yeltsin and the democratic forces politically, as critics faulted their pro-Western foreign policy and adherence to Western economic advice. Moreover, after an initial period of overwhelming focus on the West, Yeltsin by mid-1992 recognized the need to place Russia's relations with China on a firm foundation. At this stage, bilateral issues were the main driving force in the relationship. Yeltsin recognized, especially in light of the damage that the Sino-Soviet split had inflicted, that Russia's national interests required friendly relations with China. By comparison, the structure of the international system and concerns about the U.S. preponderance of power were less important factors for Yeltsin at this stage, though they affected the thinking of those espousing alternative foreign policy approaches, including Eurasianism. During this period, even as Yeltsin moved to bolster the eastern vector of Russia's foreign policy, he remained interested in building strong relations with the United States and its Western allies.

³⁰ Andrei Kozyrev, "Russia: A Chance for Survival," *Foreign Affairs* 71, no. 2 (1992): 1-16.

³¹ Vladimir Lukin, "Our Security Predicament," *Foreign Policy* 88 (Autumn 1992): 57-75.

The first year of the Russian Federation's existence coincided with the final year of George H.W. Bush's presidency. Bush and his top advisers were pragmatic realists who were primarily interested in maintaining international stability and security following the breakup of the Soviet Union. They were less interested in shaping Russia's domestic transformation through large-scale assistance for democratic and market reforms.³² During 1992, the Bush administration's foreign policy toward Russia focused on security issues, especially nuclear weapons and strategic stability. The administration secured agreement on the removal of all nuclear weapons from post-Soviet states other than Russia, signed into law the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program to secure nuclear weapons and materials in the former Soviet Union, and signed the START II arms control treaty, though this never went into effect and was superseded by later treaties.³³

The Bush administration declined to play a major role in supporting Russia's market reforms. Gaidar and his team initiated their reforms while hoping for, but not expecting, large-scale U.S. economic assistance. Anticipating that their window of opportunity for reform would be short, they initiated a rapid, comprehensive program of price liberalization and macroeconomic stabilization that earned the derisive moniker of "shock therapy."³⁴ These policies proved highly controversial, and a long-running debate about their efficacy ensued. Supporters argued that these policies achieved impressive initial results, including the reduction of inflation and budget deficits, and would have continued to be effective if the Russian government had steadfastly adhered to them.³⁵ Critics blamed the policies for deepening a recession that caused tremendous hardship for

³² James M. Goldgeier and Michael McFaul, *Power and Purpose: U.S. Policy Toward Russia After the Cold War* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), 9, 84.

³³ Ibid, 50-58; Angela E. Stent, *The Limits of Partnership: U.S.-Russian Relations in the Twenty-First Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 9-10.

³⁴ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 65-66.

³⁵ See for example Anders Åslund, *How Russia Became a Market Economy* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 1995).

the Russian people.³⁶ One clear result, however, was that the popularity of Yeltsin and the liberal reformers plummeted during 1992. As a result, Yeltsin changed course in domestic economic policy. This process also coincided with the beginning of Russia's shift to a foreign policy that featured greater balance between the West and China.³⁷

In April 1992, under pressure from Bill Clinton, his emerging Democratic rival for the presidency, Bush proposed a \$24 billion international assistance package for Russia, to which the United States would contribute \$5 billion. However, this package primarily consisted of previously committed funds, rather than new money, and ultimately much of this aid never arrived. By the time the International Monetary Fund made its first \$1 billion loan to Russia in August 1992, Yeltsin had already changed the composition of his government in response to domestic political pressures, reducing Gaidar's influence over policymaking. In December 1992, Yeltsin removed Gaidar from office.³⁸ Whether or not major Western assistance would have made a difference is debatable, but Russian liberals were disappointed. Anatoly Chubais, who at the time was a top liberal adviser to Yeltsin, later said that major U.S. assistance at this stage could have helped the cause of economic reform and led to improved U.S.-Russia relations over the long term. "This is a sad story," he said. "The United States missed a chance."³⁹

Despite Russia's disappointment over U.S. unwillingness to offer large-scale economic assistance in 1992, the United States and Russia maintained good overall relations during that year. Yeltsin continued to pursue a pro-Western foreign policy, while the United States retained its positive view of his leadership. At this stage, NATO expansion and other issues that later caused

³⁶ See for example Peter Reddaway and Dmitri Glinski, *The Tragedy of Russia's Reforms: Market Bolshevism against Democracy* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2001).

³⁷ Andrew Kuchins, "Russia's China Challenge in a Changing Asia: An American Perspective," *The Asan Forum* 1:3 (November-December 2013).

³⁸ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 81-88; Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 9-10.

³⁹ Quoted in Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 12.

tension in U.S.-Russia relations still lay in the future. Russian domestic politics and issues in the China-Russia bilateral relationship itself, rather than a Russian desire to balance the overwhelming power of the United States in the post-Soviet era, pushed Yeltsin to improve Russia's relations with China during the second half of 1992. In his outreach to China, he found a willing partner.

China's concerns about Russia's pro-Western foreign policy

China's leaders reacted warily to the collapse of communism in Central and Eastern Europe and the breakup of the Soviet Union. They were especially concerned by Russia's new pro-Western orientation, which threatened to leave China isolated in the face of U.S. power. The prospect of Russia's aligning itself with Western values was also alarming to China. In response, starting in 1992, China pursued a deliberate strategy aimed at strengthening ties with Russia. China urged Russia to remain wary of the United States, which allegedly sought to weaken Russia.⁴⁰ China's move to embrace Yeltsin and cultivate good relations with Russia was an important landmark in the post-Cold War development of China-Russia relations.⁴¹ China's leaders engaged in patient diplomacy, seeking to build upon the foundation of normalized relations that their country had achieved with the Soviet Union in the 1980s. Consistent with the approach that it would follow in the ensuing decades, China did not seek a formal alliance with Russia. Its initial concern, in the immediate aftermath of the Soviet collapse, was to discourage Russia from pursuing ties to the West in ways that would come at China's expense. After an initial period of uncertainty, Russia by mid-1992 became increasingly receptive to China's overtures.

⁴⁰ Rozman, *The Sino-Russian Challenge to the World Order*, 246-247.

⁴¹ Gilbert Rozman, "The Sino-Russian Strategic Partnership: How Close? Where To?" in *The Future of China-Russia Relations*, ed. James Bellacqua (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2009), 19.

For China, which now faced a drastically changed international environment, the new structure of the international system was a major concern. Chinese leaders initially hoped that unipolarity would quickly give way to multipolarity.⁴² For the immediate future, however, they faced a unipolar world. The concentration of capabilities in U.S. hands was worrisome for China, especially because U.S.-China relations had already deteriorated sharply following the Tiananmen Square crackdown. To be sure, China did not face a direct and immediate military threat to the mainland, as it had during the Cold War.⁴³ China's communist leaders feared, rather, that the United States would seek to change the Chinese domestic system.⁴⁴ In the extreme case, they worried that the United States might seek to induce the collapse of their regime, either through containment policies or through economic and social influence.⁴⁵ They also recognized the potential for military conflicts over territorial claims in peripheral areas, for example in the South and East China seas.⁴⁶ If Russia were to integrate with the West, possibly even joining NATO, then China's problems would only grow. In this case, Chinese strategists feared, China would find itself isolated and vulnerable to the full force of U.S. strategic pressure.

In 1992, the lingering effects of the bloodshed in Tiananmen Square continued to exert a profound influence on U.S.-China relations. During the final year of his presidency, Bush remained steadfast in his attempts to limit Tiananmen's damage to the relationship, largely in recognition of China's continued geopolitical importance. From the time of his first meeting with Deng Xiaoping and other Chinese leaders as president in February 1989, Bush focused on the geopolitics of the Washington-Moscow-Beijing triangle. Upon hearing the announcement that Gorbachev would

⁴² Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, 24-25, 88; Aaron L. Friedberg, *A Contest for Supremacy: China, America, and the Struggle for Mastery in Asia* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2011), 128-129.

⁴³ Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, 22.

⁴⁴ Gilbert Rozman, *Chinese Strategic Thought Toward Asia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 67.

⁴⁵ Goldstein, "Structural Realism and China's Foreign Policy," 135; Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, 23.

⁴⁶ Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, 23.

visit China later that year, Bush began to contemplate his own trip. Bush and his national security adviser, Brent Scowcroft, wanted to ensure that any Sino-Soviet rapprochement achieved during Gorbachev's visit would not come at the expense of the United States.⁴⁷ During Bush's visit to China, which followed his attendance at the funeral for Japanese Emperor Hirohito, he noted Deng's pessimism about the prospects for improved Sino-Soviet relations. Deng complained about the Soviet Union's insistence on Mongolia's independence from China after World War II and the Soviet "encirclement" of China throughout the Khrushchev and Brezhnev eras.⁴⁸

The Tiananmen Square crackdown shocked the American public, prompting immediate calls for U.S. sanctions and other measures to punish China. Bush immediately imposed sanctions in an effort to preempt overreaction by Congress, but he sought from the outset to prevent the incident from causing excessive damage to U.S.-China relations. He recognized that U.S. interests required cooperation with China on a variety of issues, and he sought to avoid a rupture of U.S.-China relations that would push China to realign itself with the Soviet Union.⁴⁹ In July, just one month after Tiananmen, Bush sent Scowcroft and Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger to meet with China's leaders, a visit that did not become public until the pair made another trip to Beijing in December of that year.⁵⁰ For the rest of his presidency, Bush was unable to push the relationship forward, but instead had to be content with resisting public and congressional calls for further punitive measures against China.⁵¹ Deng, meanwhile, faced a renewed domestic challenge

⁴⁷ George Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 91.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 95-96.

⁴⁹ David M. Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams: Managing U.S.-China Relations, 1989-2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 21-22.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 25-26.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 29.

to his authority by opponents of his reform measures.⁵² During this period, as Secretary of State James Baker wrote, the U.S.-China relationship “treaded water.”⁵³

Beyond the fallout from Tiananmen, other issues caused tension in U.S.-China relations in the early 1990s. Disagreements over Taiwan persisted. As the collapse of communism unfolded, first in Central and Eastern Europe and then in the Soviet Union itself, China grew concerned that the United States would seek to engineer the demise of the Chinese Communist Party through “peaceful evolution.”⁵⁴ In 1990-1991, China declined to use its veto power in the UN Security Council to obstruct the U.S. prosecution of the Gulf War, opting instead to keep a low profile.⁵⁵ During this period, Deng proposed a formula for China’s foreign policy, *taoguang yanghui*, which is often translated as “bide one’s time and hide one’s capabilities.” The U.S.-led coalition’s impressive demonstration of military force and rapid victory over Iraq, however, underscored China’s potential vulnerability.⁵⁶ In the background of these particular issues lay China’s larger concerns with the new unipolar structure of the international system and the concentration of power in U.S. hands.

Structural realist theory suggests that states facing a stronger competitor may seek to ensure their security by engaging in either internal or external balancing—that is, either by building up their own military forces or by seeking allies. To a limited extent, China pursued both objectives in the immediate aftermath of the Soviet collapse. China soon intensified its program of military modernization, bolstered by the country’s resumption of high-speed growth following Deng’s reaffirmation of economic reform in 1992. Chinese leaders recognized, however, that military

⁵² Ibid, 29.

⁵³ James A. Baker, III with Thomas M. DeFrank, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War & Peace, 1989-1992* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1995), 112.

⁵⁴ Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, 3, 44.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 46fn63.

⁵⁶ Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams*, 28.

modernization would be a long process. For a long time to come, U.S. military capabilities would far exceed those of China. Under these circumstances, with internal balancing insufficient to match U.S. capabilities, China had an incentive to look for partners abroad. It therefore sought to build close relations with Russia.⁵⁷ China declined to seek a military alliance with Russia, however. In a unipolar world, neither Russia nor any other state was powerful enough to serve as a peer competitor to the United States. Therefore, the formation of a counterhegemonic coalition was not an option for China.⁵⁸ Moreover, despite incentives to engage in balancing, China rapidly strengthened its economic ties with the United States, which were crucial for its own continued economic growth and accumulation of national power.

As dramatic as the international system's transformation from bipolarity to unipolarity was, in a sense it did not fundamentally alter China's official view of the future security environment. Deng Xiaoping's foreign policy thinking reveals a clear perception of power in dynamic, nonlinear terms that is consistent with the interpretation of power cycle theory, rather than a static view of structure. Although the world had become unipolar, Chinese leaders and strategic thinkers initially believed that the era of unipolarity would be only a brief interlude preceding the arrival of a multipolar world. This belief predated the breakup of the Soviet Union. In 1982, Deng announced that China would pursue an independent foreign policy. By the middle of the decade, he declared that the threat of major war had receded and that "peace and development" were the dominant themes of the era. In this environment, China would be able to focus on the tasks of modernization and economic development. Deng also believed by the mid-1980s that the structure of the international system was shifting from bipolarity to multipolarity.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Goldstein, "Structural Realism and China's Foreign Policy," 135-137.

⁵⁸ Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, 22.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 119.

Starting around 1986, the notion of emerging multipolarity entered mainstream Chinese strategic thought. Huan Xiang, Deng Xiaoping's "national security adviser," was the first major figure in China to argue that the future security environment would be multipolar.⁶⁰ Although the sharp confrontation between the Cold War's two armed camps was likely to continue for some time, Huan argued in early 1986, several of the superpowers' allies would become increasingly able to assert their own interests. "The trend of world multipolarity will continue to develop," he wrote.⁶¹ Deng and Huan both believed that Russia would be one of five "poles" in the future international order, along with the United States, China, the European Union, and Japan.⁶² In 1990, Deng argued that Russia would always be one of the poles, even if it were to lose several of the non-Soviet republics.⁶³ By 1992, having weathered the storm of the communist world, Chinese leaders and strategists converged on a rough consensus regarding their strategic environment. They believed that the United States, despite its new status as the sole superpower, would soon fall into steady decline. Russia, meanwhile, would soon pass through its initial period of post-Soviet strategic confusion and seek China's assistance in forming a counterweight to the United States.⁶⁴

Regardless of their beliefs about the future security environment and Russia's likely trajectory, China's leaders, so soon after normalizing relations with the Soviet Union, now had to fashion an immediate response to its dissolution. Normalization was an achievement of great historical significance that ended three decades of damaging Cold War hostility. Even after

⁶⁰ Michael Pillsbury reaches this conclusion based on his interviews with Chinese scholars. Michael Pillsbury, *China Debates the Future Security Environment* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 2000), 9.

⁶¹ 宦乡:《展望一九六九年国际形势》,《瞭望》,1986年第1期,第9页[Huan Xiang, "Outlook for the International Situation in 1986," *Liaowang* 1986 (1): 9].

⁶² Pillsbury, *China Debates the Future Security Environment*, 3-4.

⁶³ 《邓小平文选》第三卷,北京,人民出版社,1993年,第353页,见阎学通:《历史的惯性:未来十年的中国与世界》北京:中信出版社,2013年,第87页[*Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Vol. 3 (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 1993), 353. Quoted in Yan Xuetong, *Inertia of History: China and the World in the Next Ten Years* (Zhongxin Chubanshe, 2013), 87].

⁶⁴ Rozman, *Chinese Strategic Thought Toward Asia*, 71-72.

normalization, however, relations between China and the Soviet Union remained “weak and fragile,” in the words of one Chinese scholar. During the period between normalization and the Soviet collapse in December 1991, negative influences left over by history ensured that the level of mutual trust could not reach the “hot, deep, and high levels” achieved later.⁶⁵ As Deng surveyed developments in the Soviet Union during this period, he tried to take the long view: “No matter how the Soviet Union changes, we always want, on the foundation of the five principles of peaceful coexistence, to unhurriedly develop relations, including political relations, and not to carry out an ideological struggle.”⁶⁶

Nevertheless, the reaction by Chinese leaders to the August 1991 coup attempt in the Soviet Union illustrated their concerns. Officially, the government of China responded to news of the coup by reiterating its position of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states and expressing hope that relations with the Soviet Union would remain unchanged. However, according to closed sources cited by Oleg Rakhmanin, a China scholar and former Soviet Communist Party official, the top leadership in China expressed sympathy with the coup plotters and hoped that the coup would succeed.⁶⁷ Yu Hongliang, the Chinese ambassador to the Soviet Union, visited Gennady Yanayev, the formal leader of the conspirators, while the coup was in progress. On behalf of the PRC government, he expressed hope that the Soviet Union would now

⁶⁵ 姜毅：《新世纪的中俄关系》北京，世界知识出版社，2007年，第4页 [Jiang Yi, *China-Russian Relations in the New Century* (Beijing: Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 2007), 4].

⁶⁶ 《邓小平文选》第三卷，353页。见杨闯，高飞，冯玉军著：《百年中俄关系》，第304页 [*Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Vol. 3, 1993), 353. Cited in Yang Chuang, Gao Fei, Feng Yujun, eds., *One Hundred Years of China-Russia Relations*, 304].

⁶⁷ Рахманин О.Б. К истории отношений России-СССР с Китаем в XX веке. М.: Памятники исторической мысли, 2002. С. 79 [O.B. Rakhmanin, *Toward the History of the Relations Between Russia-USSR and China in the 20th Century* (Moscow: Pomyatniki Istroicheskoi Mysli, 2002), 79]. Цит. По: Бажанов Е.П. От дружбы через конфронтацию к нормализации. Советско-китайские отношения с 1949 по 1991 г. // Россия и Китай: четыре века взаимодействия—история, Современное состояние и перспективы развития российско-китайских отношений / Под ред. А.В. Лукина. М.: Весь мир, 2013. С. 293-294 [Cited in Yegveny Bazhanov, “From Friendship Through Confrontation to Normalization: Soviet-Chinese Relations from 1949 to 1991,” in *Four Centuries of Interaction—History, Contemporary Conditions, and Prospects for the Development of Russia-China Relations*, ed. Alexander Lukin (Moscow: Ves’ Mir, 2013), 293-294].

return to the path of upholding socialist ideals and that Beijing and Moscow would be able to cooperate more fruitfully.⁶⁸ At the time of the coup, some Chinese scholars published articles criticizing Gorbachev as a traitor to communism.⁶⁹

Following the coup's failure, the breakup of the Soviet Union four months later posed a major challenge for China. The collapse of the world's first communist country placed ideological pressure on China and its communist rulers, while the Western orientation of the new Russian government threatened to worsen China's international environment. The breakup of the Soviet Union and the rise of several newly independent states along China's western periphery also threatened to unleash new forces, including ethnic disputes, regional conflicts, and Islamic fundamentalism, with potentially negative consequences for China.⁷⁰ Chinese leaders also recognized that Russia, with its huge territory, economic potential, military capability, and high technology, maintained the ability to wield considerable power and influence.⁷¹ Less than three years after the normalization of Sino-Soviet relations, the future of China-Russia relations was suddenly cloudy.⁷²

China's early approach was to seek continuity and a smooth transition in relations. On December 25, 1991, the day that Gorbachev delivered his resignation speech and the Russian tricolor flag replaced the Soviet hammer and sickle on top of the Kremlin, China announced that

⁶⁸ Бажанов. От дружбы через конфронтацию к нормализации. С. 294 [Bazhanov, "From Friendship Through Confrontation to Normalization," 294].

⁶⁹ Li Jingjie, "From Good Neighbors to Strategic Partners," in *Rapprochement or Rivalry? Russia-China Relations in a Changing Asia*, ed. Sherman W. Garnett (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2000), 77.

⁷⁰ 杨闯, 高飞, 冯玉军著: 《百年中俄关系》, 第 417 页 [Yang Chuang, Gao Fei, Feng Yujun, eds., *One Hundred Years of China-Russia Relations*, 417]; Бажанов Е.П. Российско-китайские отношения на современном этапе. С. 417 [Bazhanov, "The Contemporary Stage of Russia-China Relations," 417].

⁷¹ Andrew J. Nathan and Robert S. Ross, *The Great Wall and the Empty Fortress: China's Search for Security* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), 35.

⁷² 杨闯, 高飞, 冯玉军著: 《百年中俄关系》, 第 304 页 [Yang Chuang, Gao Fei, Feng Yujun, eds., *One Hundred Years of China-Russia Relations*, 304].

it would abide by all treaties signed with the former Soviet Union, including a May 1991 border agreement, and expressed hope that all of the post-Soviet states would do likewise.⁷³ Two days later, China's foreign minister, Qian Qichen, sent a telegram to Kozyrev informing him that China would recognize the government of the Russian Federation. That same day, he telegraphed the other post-Soviet states to recognize their independence as well.⁷⁴ On December 29, China and Russia signed a joint declaration in which China officially recognized Russia as the successor state to the Soviet Union and a permanent member of the UN Security Council. China and Russia also pledged to conduct their relations on the basis of joint declarations signed during Gorbachev's visit to Beijing in 1989 and Jiang Zemin's visit to the Soviet Union in May 1991. The two sides expressed their intention to develop friendly, good-neighborly relations based on the five principles of peaceful coexistence and to continue negotiations on border demarcation, demilitarization, and military confidence-building measures.⁷⁵

These agreements did not, however, lead to rapid development of the relationship. Chinese leaders were concerned that Russia, given its pro-Western orientation, would neglect its relations with China. Given the uncertainty, December 1991 marked a low point in China-Russia relations.⁷⁶

One early Chinese assessment of the new phase in China-Russia relations, while acknowledging the uncertainty, offered grounds for cautious optimism. This report, co-authored by the director of the China Institute of International Studies under the Foreign Ministry, argued that the positive trends that had developed in the relationship since the mid-1980s, culminating in Sino-Soviet normalization, augured well for future relations. Most importantly, Gorbachev's

⁷³ Ibid, 305.

⁷⁴ Qian Qichen, *Ten Episodes in China's Diplomacy* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 175.

⁷⁵ 杨闯, 高飞, 冯玉军著: 《百年中俄关系》, 第 305 页 [Yang Chuang, Gao Fei, Feng Yujun, eds., *One Hundred Years of China-Russia Relations*, 305].

⁷⁶ Rozman, "Sino-Russian Relations: Mutual Assessments and Predictions," 131.

demilitarization along China's border regions would continue to benefit China. This would provide China with a secure strategic rear. Moreover, because Russia was about to embark on a difficult process of domestic transformation, it was unlikely to conduct an aggressive foreign policy. The main risk for China was that Russia would integrate closely with the West in the political, economic, and security spheres. China, the report argued, should remain optimistic about the relationship while calmly observing Russian developments.⁷⁷ The fifth plenary session of the 7th National People's Congress, which opened in March 1992, merely affirmed that China would maintain normal relations with the former communist countries on the basis of equality and mutual benefit.⁷⁸

Initial developments in Russia's foreign policy reinforced China's concerns. The early Russian democrats, in the view of many Chinese leaders and scholars, were "full of illusions" about joining the West, establishing a "big Euro-Atlantic family from Vancouver to Vladivostok," and receiving large-scale Western economic assistance on the model of the Marshall Plan.⁷⁹ In their speeches, Yeltsin and Kozyrev spoke frequently of their desire for alliance relations with the West but said little about relations with China.⁸⁰ Kozyrev made an official visit to China in March 1992, which brought some clarity to the relationship and affirmed that the two countries could develop normal relations.⁸¹ However, tensions were also evident during this visit, especially when

⁷⁷ 杜攻主编，倪立羽副主编：《转轨中的世界格局》北京：世界知识出版社，1992 [Du Gong and Ni Liyu, eds., *The World Framework in Changing Course* (Beijing: Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 1992)]. Cited in Li Jingjie, "From Good Neighbors to Strategic Partners," in *Rapprochement or Rivalry? Russia-China Relations in a Changing Asia*, ed. Sherman W. Garnett (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2000), 74-75.

⁷⁸ 杨闯，高飞，冯玉军著：《百年中俄关系》，第 306 页 [Yang Chuang, Gao Fei, Feng Yujun, eds., *One Hundred Years of China-Russia Relations*, 306].

⁷⁹ 李静杰：《中俄战略协作伙伴关系及其美国因素》，《东欧中亚研究》，2000 年第 3 期，第 10 页 [Li Jingjie, "China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations and the American Factor," *Dongou Zhongya Yanjiu* 2000 (3): 10].

⁸⁰ 杨闯，高飞，冯玉军著：《百年中俄关系》，第 306 页 [Yang Chuang, Gao Fei, Feng Yujun, eds., *One Hundred Years of China-Russia Relations*, 306].

⁸¹ Ibid, 307].

Kozyrev criticized the Chinese leadership on human rights issues. Qian Qichen responded sharply, insisting that foreign interference in China's domestic affairs was unacceptable. During this visit, the two sides even acknowledged publicly that they took "different approaches to some quite serious issues."⁸² The next month, Kozyrev published an article outlining Russia's foreign policy interests. He argued that Russia's top two priorities were to enter the ranks of the advanced democratic states and to cultivate friendly relations with neighboring countries. In listing Russia's neighboring countries, however, he neglected even to mention China.⁸³ The unmistakable message, it seemed to Chinese leaders, was that China was not a priority for Russia at this stage. If the two countries were to build on the foundation of Sino-Soviet normalization and develop strong China-Russia relations in the post-Soviet era, greater efforts would be required.

Getting China-Russia relations back on track

Owing to the factors described above, China-Russia relations grew more distant between late 1991 and early 1992. However, by mid-1992, China and Russia began to overcome the rift in their relations and resumed efforts to build cooperation. Both countries had reasons to cultivate this relationship.

For China, a combination of factors at the international and bilateral levels called for improved relations with Russia. China based its policy toward Russia on "three no's" and "three goods." The three no's signified no alliance, no opposing each other, and no standing in opposition

⁸² Бажанов. Российско-китайские отношения на современном этапе. С. 424-425 [Bazhanov, "The Contemporary Stage of Russia-China Relations," 424-425].

⁸³ Независимая Газета, 11 апреля 1992 [Nezavisimaya Gazeta, April 11, 1992]. Several Chinese sources note this omission. See for example 李静杰: 《中俄战略协作伙伴关系及其美国因素》, 第 10 页 [Li Jingjie, "China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations and the American Factor," 10] and 姜毅: 《新世纪的中俄关系》, 第 5 页 [Jiang Yi, *China-Russian Relations in the New Century*, 5].

to any third party. The three goods called for China and Russia to be good neighbors, good partners, and good friends.⁸⁴

The new unipolar structure of the international system offered incentives that shaped China's policies toward Russia from the time of the Soviet collapse. China's inability to approach parity with U.S. military power in the immediate future encouraged the country's leaders to cultivate relations with other countries, including Russia. As the "three no's" suggest, China did not require the formation of an anti-Western military alliance, but it wanted to ensure that Russia would not conduct a foreign policy that was inimical to China's interests. At this stage, its main concern was to prevent Russia from drifting into the U.S. orbit. The Russian Federation's early pro-Western course caused some Chinese leaders to fear that Russia would become a junior partner of the United States.⁸⁵ In particular, Chinese leaders' concerns about a possible "linking up" of Russia and NATO were a factor in their decision to activate diplomacy toward Russia.⁸⁶ The establishment of friendly relations with Russia, which remained a great power despite the Soviet collapse, allowed China to avoid the predicament of isolation in the face of U.S. power and policies toward China that it considered hostile.⁸⁷

As long as Russia maintained some strategic distance from the United States, China could avoid such international isolation. China therefore sought to build upon the momentum gained during Sino-Soviet normalization in order to build friendly, good-neighborly relations with the

⁸⁴ 席来旺：《外交谋略》，北京，红旗出版社，1996年，第435页 [Xi Laiwang, *Diplomatic Strategy* (Beijing: Hongqi Chubanshe, 1996), 435].

⁸⁵ Dmitri Trenin, "The China Factor: Challenge and Chance for Russia," in *Rapprochement or Rivalry? Russia-China Relations in a Changing Asia*, ed. Sherman W. Garnett (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2000), 46.

⁸⁶ Ларин В.Л. В тени проснувшегося дракона. Владивосток: Дальнаука, 2006. С. 45 [V.L. Larin, *In the Shadow of the Awoken Dragon* (Vladivostok: Dal'nauka, 2006), 45]. The author of this book, Viktor Larin, is an expert on China based in Vladivostok and is well-connected with Chinese foreign policy thinkers. He writes that fears about Russia linking up with NATO were not aired publicly in China but were discussed in interested circles.

⁸⁷ 李静杰：《中俄战略协作伙伴关系及其美国因素》，第10页 [Li Jingjie, "China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations and the American Factor," 10].

new Russia, as the “three goods” indicate. Amicable bilateral relations, by providing China with a secure strategic rear and preventing any repetition of the damage caused by the Sino-Soviet split, would be beneficial in their own right. In addition, they would establish the basis for a valuable relationship that could relieve international strategic pressure on China.

China’s diplomacy toward Russia soon had the additional benefit of assisting China’s military modernization. Following the Tiananmen Square crackdown, Western sanctions hindered China’s ability to import weapons. With the Russian defense industry now desperate for export markets following the collapse of domestic orders, China could augment its military modernization by purchasing Russian arms. In 1990, China signed a contract to purchase Su-27 fighter jets, which Russia delivered in 1992. However, the weapons that China purchased from Russia throughout most of the 1990s, including Su-27SK fighter jets and Sovremenny-class destroyers, mostly employed technology dating to the 1960s or 1970s, rather than being state of the art models.⁸⁸ Despite their contribution to China’s growing military capabilities, therefore, imported Russian arms did not allow China to challenge U.S. military might in the early post-Soviet period.⁸⁹ In fact, China remained militarily weak even in comparison to several of its neighboring states in Asia.⁹⁰ Although Chinese leaders remained confident about their country’s prospects for accumulating national power, they recognized that China’s rise would be a long-term process, requiring at least several decades.

A combination of factors caused Russia, after an initial period of relative neglect, to seek improved relations with China. These included strictly bilateral factors, Russian domestic politics,

⁸⁸ Барабанов М., Кашин В., Макиенко К. Оборонная Промышленность и Торговля Вооружениями КНР. М.: РИСИ. 2013. С. 155 [Mikhail Barabanov, Vasily Kashin, Konstantin Makienko, *The Defense Industry and Arms Trade of the PRC* (Moscow: Russia Institute for Strategic Studies, 2013), 155].

⁸⁹ David Shambaugh, *Modernizing China’s Military: Progress, Problems, and Prospects* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 330; Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, 116.

⁹⁰ Goldstein, “Structural Realism and China’s Foreign Policy,” 137.

and, indirectly, pressures exerted by the structure of the international system. Structural factors that might have encouraged Russia to balance against the overwhelming power of the United States still had no direct impact on Yeltsin and his pro-Western advisers, who remained committed to good relations with the United States and integration into Western institutions. However, such structural factors began to exert an indirect influence on the Russian leadership, refracted through the prism of Russian domestic politics. An early debate had emerged between Westernizers, who dominated Yeltsin's early foreign policy, and Eurasianists, who argued in favor of a more balanced approach to the country's foreign relations. The severe economic recession that Russia endured in 1992 weakened Yeltsin and his team of liberal reformers politically. As the pro-Western faction's political fortunes waned, the influence of the Eurasianist school of thought grew. Facing these pressures, Yeltsin began to adjust his foreign policy.

Apart from domestic political pressures, Yeltsin increasingly recognized that factors intrinsic in the China-Russia bilateral relationship demanded attention. Although Russia continued to seek improved relations with the West, it concluded that its national interests required a balance between East and West. No matter how its relations with the West developed, Russia needed to maintain friendly relations with China, its large neighbor. The Sino-Soviet split had demonstrated the heavy costs of adversarial relations for both countries. Igor Rogachev, the Russian ambassador to China, concluded that "more than two decades of senseless and dangerous Soviet-Chinese confrontation helped the peoples, societies, and leaders of our two countries to work out a kind of 'immunity against confrontation,' which to no small degree guarantees no repeat of what happened previously and disposes us to fundamentally different approaches from those of the past."⁹¹ In

⁹¹ Рогачев И.А. Российско-китайские отношения в конце XX – начале XXI века. М.: Известия, 2005. С. 47 [I.A. Rogachev, *Russia-China Relations at the End of the 20th Ccentury and the Beginning of the 21st Century* (Moscow: Izvestia. 2005), 47]. Цит. по: Лукин. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 309 [Cited in Lukin, "From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 309].

addition, many practical issues in bilateral relations required cooperation, including efforts to demarcate the border, establish stable relations along the two countries' 2,600-mile eastern frontier, and develop bilateral economic cooperation.

As 1992 progressed, Yeltsin began to speak more positively about China. In April, he called China a "reliable and friendly partner" of Russia.⁹² In July, he declared that Russia was "firmly and unmovably heading to the East" and would establish closer relations with Asian countries, including China.⁹³ In September, Yeltsin abruptly cancelled a scheduled trip to Japan, following the failure of negotiations over the two countries' territorial dispute.⁹⁴ In October, he acknowledged that Russia had made many mistakes in its foreign policy over the previous year, including that "in developing relations with the West, at the same time, we didn't persevere in the work of opening up the East."⁹⁵ By November, when Qian Qichen visited Moscow to prepare for Yeltsin's visit to China the following month, Yeltsin told the Chinese foreign minister that, "Not only in our Asian policy, but even in our world foreign policy, China occupies a priority position."⁹⁶ At an international conference in Beijing one month before Yeltsin's visit to China, participants from both China and Russia overwhelmingly agreed that the prospects for bilateral cooperation were bright.⁹⁷

⁹² Бажанов. Российско-китайские отношения на современном этапе. С. 417 [Bazhanov, "The Contemporary Stage of Russia-China Relations," 417].

⁹³ Li Jingjie, "From Good Neighbors to Strategic Partners," 75.

⁹⁴ Serge Schmemmann, "Yeltsin Cancels a Visit to Japan As Dispute Over Islands Simmers," *New York Times*, Sept. 10, 1992; Rozman, *The Sino-Russian Challenge to the World Order*, 244.

⁹⁵ 李静杰:《中俄战略协作伙伴关系及其美国因素》,第10页 [Li Jingjie, "China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations and the American Factor," 10].

⁹⁶ Li Jingjie, "From Good Neighbors to Strategic Partners," 75.

⁹⁷ 新形势下的中俄关系—国际学术研讨会纪要,《现代国际关系》1993年第1期,第27-30,43页 ["China-Russia Relations Under the New Situation—Summary of International Academic Seminar," *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* 1 (1993), 27-30, 43]; 环顾全球,展望未来—国际形势座谈会纪要,《现代国际关系》1993年第1期,第1-26页 ["Looking Round the World and into the Future—Summary of International Conference," *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* 1 (1993), 1-26].

Upon his arrival in Beijing on December 17, 1992, for his first official visit to China, Yeltsin declared that, “Russia and China should establish a new era in our mutual relations.”⁹⁸ During this visit, China and Russia laid down the basic conditions for the development of their relations.⁹⁹ The two countries reached agreement on the principle that each country’s development path was its own choice, and that each side would respect the other’s choice.¹⁰⁰ In a joint declaration, the two sides declared that they “view each other as friendly countries.” Tellingly, however, the declaration failed to address China-Russia cooperation on issues at the international level.¹⁰¹ At this stage, the U.S.-Russia honeymoon continued, discouraging Yeltsin from emphasizing international factors in Russia’s relations with China.¹⁰² Cooperation on international issues would have to wait, but China’s leaders were satisfied that their fears of Russia joining the West and turning its back on China had proved to be unfounded. From now on, Russia’s foreign policy would not focus exclusively on the West, but would give due consideration as well to Asia, including China.¹⁰³

⁹⁸ 杨闯, 高飞, 冯玉军著: 《百年中俄关系》, 第 307 页 [Yang Chuang, Gao Fei, Feng Yujun, eds., *One Hundred Years of China-Russia Relations*, 307].

⁹⁹ Лукин. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 306 [Lukin, “From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 306].

¹⁰⁰ 李静杰: 《中俄战略协作和中美俄“三角关系”》, 《俄罗斯东欧中亚研究》2014 年第 4 期, 第 45 页, [Li Jingjie, “China-Russia Strategic Cooperation and China-U.S.-Russia ‘Triangular Relations’,” *Eluosi Dongou Zhongya Yanjiu* 2014 (4): 45].

¹⁰¹ 关于中华人民共和国和俄罗斯联邦相互关系基础的联合声明, 北京, 1992 年 12 月 28 日 [Basic Joint Declaration on Mutual Relations between the People’s Republic of China and the Russian Federation, Beijing, December 28, 1992], <http://www.mfa.gov.cn/chn/pds/ziliao/1179/t5414.htm>

¹⁰² 李静杰: 《中俄战略协作伙伴关系及其美国因素》, 第 10 页 [Li Jingjie, “China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations and the American Factor,” 10].

¹⁰³ Li Jingjie, “From Good Neighbors to Strategic Partners,” 77.

The Beginnings of Cooperation on International Issues (1993-1994)

Russia opens to cooperation with China on international issues

Russia's primary motivation in seeking to improve relations with China during the second half of 1992 was to avoid the costs of troubled relations with its large neighbor. The 1993 Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, which Yeltsin approved in April of that year, made this point clear.¹⁰⁴ "In the past," this document stated, "confrontation with the PRC was excessively costly for the USSR (as for China) and was one of the main reasons for our estrangement from the [Asia-Pacific] region." In seeking the "realistic transformation" of their relations in the post-Soviet era, the Foreign Policy Concept argued, the two countries were obliged to recognize the differences in their ideology and socio-political systems. Ultimately, however, Russia had "no alternative" to friendly, intensive connections with China.¹⁰⁵

During 1993 and 1994, Russia became increasingly open to the idea of cooperation with China on international issues, at least in joint bilateral declarations. From Russia's standpoint, the main catalyst for this change was the beginning of discussions in Washington about the possibility of expanding NATO to include former Warsaw Pact members. These discussions began during the first year of Bill Clinton's presidency and gained force the following year. This issue also resonated in Russian domestic politics, which endured a year of turmoil in 1993. A constitutional

¹⁰⁴ Several Chinese sources note this document's position on relations with China, including the following: 李渤: 《俄罗斯政治与外交》 时事出版社, 2008 年, 第 304 页 [Li Bo, *Russia's Politics and Diplomacy* (Beijing: Shishi Chubanshe, 2008), 304]; 姜毅: 《新世纪的中俄关系》 第 5 页 [Jiang Yi, *China-Russian Relations in the New Century*, 5].

¹⁰⁵ Основные положения концепции внешней политики Российской Федерации утверждены Распоряжением Президента Российской Федерации Б.Н. Ельцина от 23 апреля 1993 г. // Внешняя политика и безопасность современной России: 1991-2002. Хрестоматия. Т. 4. М.: Московский Государственный Институт Международных Отношений (Университет) МИД России, 2002, С. 39 ["Basic provisions of the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, approved by an order of B.N. Yeltsin, President of the Russian Federation, on April 23, 1993," in *Foreign Policy and National Security of Contemporary Russia: 1991-2002. Anthology, Vol. 4* (Moscow: Moscow State Institute of International Relations (University) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, 2002), 39].

crisis developed throughout the year, culminating in a standoff between Yeltsin and the Congress of People's Deputies, the parliamentary body that had carried over from Soviet times. In October, Yeltsin resolved this crisis in his favor by ordering the use of military force, including the deployment of tanks to shell the White House, the headquarters of the Congress of People's Deputies, which some of Yeltsin's parliamentary foes had occupied.

The new parliamentary elections in December brought shocking results. Ultranationalist forces led by Vladimir Zhirinovsky's Liberal Democratic Party of Russia fared surprisingly well, capturing 22.9 percent of the vote, compared with just 15.5 percent for Gaidar's party, Russia's Choice.¹⁰⁶ Zhirinovsky himself viewed China as a threat, arguing that it was one of Russia's two main enemies, along with the United States. However, other nationalists, including some within Zhirinovsky's own party, considered China to be both a model for successful economic reforms and a potential partner in an alliance against the United States.¹⁰⁷ Despite these contradictory views on China within the nationalist camp, the parliamentary election results clearly added to domestic political pressures on Yeltsin to modify his pro-Western stance and to bring greater balance to Russia's foreign policy. The momentum toward NATO expansion that built in the United States during 1993 and 1994 coincided with greater diplomatic outreach by Yeltsin to China, as discussed below in detail. During this period, not for the last time, Yeltsin complained that the prospect of NATO expansion was causing damage to U.S.-Russia relations, to his administration, and to the cause of reform in Russia.

The issue of NATO expansion arose early in Clinton's presidency. Appeals to Clinton by Lech Walesa, the president of Poland, and Vaclav Havel, the president of the Czech Republic, both

¹⁰⁶ Michael McFaul, *Russia's Unfinished Revolution: Political Change from Gorbachev to Putin* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 274.

¹⁰⁷ Лукин. Медведь наблюдает за драконом. С. 356, 405 [Lukin, *The Bear Watches the Dragon* (Russian edition), 356, 405].

of whom had gained renown as anti-Soviet dissidents during the Cold War, made an impression on the president early in his first term. The announcement in June 1993 that NATO heads of state would meet in January 1994 in Brussels, where the topic of enlargement was sure to arise, spurred the bureaucracy in Washington to begin formulating a position on the issue.¹⁰⁸ A group of officials within the administration, most prominently National Security Adviser Anthony Lake, argued that NATO should promulgate criteria and a timetable for membership during the meeting in Brussels.¹⁰⁹ Others, including Strobe Talbott, the ambassador-at-large for the New Independent States, argued for a more cautious approach. Offering concrete details about prospective enlargement at this stage, Talbott argued, would have a negative effect on domestic political developments in Russia, which were already enduring turbulence.¹¹⁰

As the debate unfolded, the Partnership for Peace, developed by the Pentagon, emerged as a means for NATO to develop military-to-military ties, short of alliance membership, with all interested states of the former Warsaw Pact and the former Soviet Union, as well with traditional European neutral states. Although the Partnership for Peace was a serious proposal for military cooperation, it also represented an interim compromise that postponed a decision about NATO enlargement while the debate continued.¹¹¹ In October, following a meeting of his principal advisers to discuss this issue, Clinton decided that the Partnership for Peace would be the centerpiece of NATO's relations with non-member states in the region for the time being, but that he would also announce in Brussels that NATO was open to eventual expansion.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ James M. Goldgeier, *Not Whether But When: The U.S. Decision to Enlarge NATO* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1999), 19-20.

¹⁰⁹ Goldgeier, *Not Whether But When*, 24, 29-32, 39.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 39-40.

Yeltsin displayed inconsistency on this issue during 1993, but he eventually spoke out forcefully against NATO expansion. In August, during a visit to Warsaw, Yeltsin expressed understanding of Poland's wish to join the alliance, saying that this would not threaten Russia's interests. In late September, however, as his conflict with the parliament escalated, Yeltsin reversed his position. After dissolving the parliament on September 21, Yeltsin sent a letter to Clinton and other Western heads of state opposing any expansion of NATO. Western diplomats speculated that Yeltsin had acted under pressure from the Russian armed forces, as well as from officials in the foreign and defense ministries. As the showdown with his parliamentary foes escalated, Yeltsin desperately needed support from the armed forces, large segments of which were fiercely opposed to NATO expansion.¹¹³

A few days after Clinton decided on the approach that he would take at the Brussels summit, Secretary of State Warren Christopher met with Yeltsin in Moscow to explain U.S. policy. Christopher told Yeltsin that the United States would not take concrete steps toward alliance expansion in Brussels but would instead focus on the Partnership for Peace. Christopher added that the United States would continue to contemplate NATO expansion in the long term. Yeltsin was pleased with the U.S. focus on Partnership for Peace. "This really is a great idea, really great," Yeltsin told Christopher. "Tell Bill that I am thrilled by this brilliant stroke." Christopher concluded in retrospect that Yeltsin must have assumed, mistakenly, that the Partnership for Peace would preclude NATO expansion.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Roger Cohen, "Russia Opposes Expansion of NATO in Eastern Europe," *New York Times*, October 2, 1993. Cited in Goldgeier, *Not Whether But When*, 36, 183n62; Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 188-189.

¹¹⁴ Warren Christopher, *In the Stream of History: Shaping Foreign Policy for a New Era* (Stanford University Press, 1988), 93-94. Cited in Goldgeier, *Not Whether But When*, 55. See also Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 187.

During his trip to Europe in January 1994 to attend the NATO summit, Clinton made several statements that hinted at his support for eventual NATO expansion but ultimately reflected the lingering ambiguity in administration policy. In his speech at the NATO summit on January 10, Clinton said that the Partnership for Peace “sets in motion a process that leads to the enlargement of NATO.”¹¹⁵ Two days later, at a press conference in Prague with Central European leaders, Clinton said that “now the question is no longer whether NATO will take on new members but when and how.”¹¹⁶ Despite these seemingly clear statements of commitment to eventual NATO expansion, both skeptics of expansion within the U.S. government and Yeltsin himself could interpret them as largely theoretical or even meaningless.¹¹⁷ During a visit to Moscow, which immediately followed the NATO summit and subsequent meetings with Central European leaders, Clinton told Yeltsin that while NATO “plainly contemplated an expansion,” the Partnership for Peace was “the real thing now.”¹¹⁸ In the course of his meeting with Clinton in Moscow, Yeltsin reiterated his support for the Partnership for Peace and expressed hope that one day Russia would be integrated in a European-wide security structure.¹¹⁹

In the months following Clinton’s trip to Europe in January 1994, U.S.-Russia relations appeared to develop smoothly. During Clinton’s visit to Moscow that month, he and Yeltsin signed an accord with Leonid Kravchuk, the president of Ukraine, committing Ukraine to eliminate all nuclear weapons from its territory. Later that year, Ukraine joined the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear state and received security guarantees from the United States, Great Britain, and Russia.¹²⁰ During the G-7 meeting in Naples in July 1994, Clinton offered to include Russia

¹¹⁵ Quoted in Goldgeier, *Not Whether But When*, 55.

¹¹⁶ Quoted in *ibid*, 57.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, 57-59.

¹¹⁸ Quoted in Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 187.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, 59.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, 170.

as a full partner in the G-8 for political discussions, though the G-7 retained its role in managing the global economy. By the end of July, Yeltsin agreed to complete the withdrawal of Russian military forces from the Baltic states before the end of August.¹²¹ In the spring of 1994, Kozyrev reportedly boasted to a group of Russian ambassadors that “the greatest achievement of Russian foreign policy in 1993 was to prevent NATO’s expansion eastward to our borders.”¹²² In June, Kozyrev signed the Partnership for Peace Framework Document, which officially made Russia a member of the Partnership for Peace.¹²³

By the fall of 1994, however, the Clinton administration’s commitment to NATO expansion was becoming clear. In July, during a visit to Warsaw, Clinton had reiterated and amplified his remarks from January, indicating that he supported the establishment of criteria and a timetable for membership.¹²⁴ In September, Vice President Al Gore pledged that discussions on the question of NATO expansion would begin that fall.¹²⁵ In late September, Richard Holbrooke, the new assistant secretary of state for European affairs, presided over an interagency meeting during which he announced, to the surprise of many expansion skeptics in the room, especially from the Pentagon, that NATO expansion was now official U.S. policy.¹²⁶

In late September, during a visit by Yeltsin to Washington, Clinton told Yeltsin that all of the new democracies in Europe, including Russia, would potentially be eligible for NATO membership. The alliance would expand, Clinton said, but no timetable had been set. Clinton offered Yeltsin “three no’s,” signifying “no surprises, no rush, and no exclusion.” Moreover, Clinton pledged that NATO would not offer invitations to any new members until after the 1996

¹²¹ Ibid, 174-175.

¹²² Ibid, 187.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Quoted in Goldgeier, *Not Whether But When*, 68.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 71-72.

¹²⁶ Ibid, 73-76.

presidential elections in Russia and the United States.¹²⁷ Clinton, who believed that Yeltsin was the best hope for the success of democratic and market reforms in Russia, wanted to help Yeltsin win re-election in July 1996. Yeltsin, in turn, asked Clinton to attend the summit of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in Budapest in December. Russia sought to shift the focus of European security issues from NATO to the CSCE, which was rechristened the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) during the December summit. Russia favored this organization because its membership encompassed all of Europe, including Russia. The United States, however, had no intention of curtailing NATO's role. Clinton told Yeltsin that he would attend the summit in Budapest if it was important to Yeltsin.¹²⁸

Clinton went to Budapest, but Yeltsin's ferocious opposition to NATO expansion turned the summit into an embarrassment for the Clinton administration. Yeltsin had been enraged to hear the December 1 announcement that NATO planned to conduct a study of expansion during 1995. He and other supporters of liberal reform believed that NATO expansion signaled the West's loss of faith in Russian democracy.¹²⁹ During his speech in Budapest on December 5, Clinton said that NATO would expand despite Russia's opposition, as "no country outside will be allowed to veto expansion." When it was his turn to speak, Yeltsin fired back: "Europe, even before it has managed to shrug off the legacy of the Cold War, is risking encumbering itself with a cold peace." Clinton and his foreign policy team were stunned by Yeltsin's words, but Yeltsin had signaled his opinion earlier, while boarding the airplane to Budapest: "Russia is against the North Atlantic Alliance expanding the sphere of its influence to the east, since NATO's boundaries will then approach the

¹²⁷ Ibid, 72; Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 187.

¹²⁸ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 189.

¹²⁹ Ibid, 183-184.

borders of the Russian Federation.... The two blocs we have left behind us would reappear in Europe and this would certainly not benefit European security.”¹³⁰

In 1993 and 1994, therefore, a combination of domestic and international factors placed pressure on Yeltsin to seek greater balance in Russian foreign policy. The growing momentum in the United States toward support for NATO expansion, which was the main international factor, also exerted influence on Yeltsin through its effect on Russian domestic politics, as Yeltsin’s reversal on the issue in the fall of 1993 demonstrates. To be sure, the United States and Russia achieved cooperation on many issues in 1993 and 1994, including the removal of nuclear weapons from former Soviet states other than Russia, the withdrawal of Russian military forces from the Baltics, and an enhanced role for Russia in the G-7. Moreover, until late 1994, Russia believed that the United States had not yet made a decision on NATO expansion and would first seek cooperation through the Partnership for Peace.

Yet Russia’s clear discomfort with even preliminary discussions of NATO expansion, coupled with domestic political pressures, gave Yeltsin an incentive to seek cooperation with other international partners. In early 1994, Kozyrev announced that Russia would adjust its foreign policy in response to the will of the voters, as expressed in the parliamentary elections.¹³¹ Shortly after Clinton’s statement in January 1994 that NATO expansion was a matter of not whether but when, Yeltsin began to seek closer relations with China. From Russia’s perspective, China was an attractive partner for reasons involving both national interests and national identity. As an emerging rival to the United States, China possessed enough geopolitical weight to be a formidable partner. China also shared Russia’s unwillingness to accept a U.S.-centered international community that would criticize other countries’ domestic political arrangements and restrictions

¹³⁰ Goldgeier, *Not Whether But When*, 87-88.

¹³¹ Tsygankov, *Russia’s Foreign Policy*, 87.

on civil society. For its part, China was receptive to these entreaties because of its own concerns about the international environment and tensions in relations with the United States.¹³²

China maintains interest in international cooperation with Russia

China's discomfort with the new unipolar structure of the international system continued during 1993 and 1994, though the focus of its concerns shifted somewhat. In the immediate aftermath of the Soviet Union's dissolution, having observed the collapse of communism throughout the former Soviet bloc, the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party were concerned about their own regime's future. They feared that the United States would try to induce the same kind of change in China that had occurred in Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The crackdown in Tiananmen Square ensured that China would endure heavy U.S. criticism on human rights issues for years to come, which proved to be a constant source of tension in the relationship. Nevertheless, China weathered its own domestic turmoil, and the Chinese Communist Party remained in power. Deng's reaffirmation of economic reform in 1992, featuring his famous Southern Tour, reignited high-speed economic growth.

If U.S. leaders had hoped during the period from 1989 to 1992 that the political changes occurring in the former Soviet bloc would reach China, then by 1994 they were forced to revise their expectations. China demonstrated its growing confidence as early as February 1992, when the Chinese National People's Congress adopted legislation proclaiming the country's willingness to use force to defend its claims in the Senkaku (Diaoyu), Paracel (Xisha), and Spratly (Nansha) Islands.¹³³ By 1994, the United States recognized that China had achieved political stabilization

¹³² Rozman, *The Sino-Russian Challenge to the World Order*, 245-247.

¹³³ Rajon Menon, "The Strategic Convergence Between Russia and China," *Survival* 39:2 (1997), 114.

and rapid economic growth. In the view of many Chinese leaders and scholars, the United States began to propagate the “China threat theory.”¹³⁴ This theme became more prominent in Chinese arguments throughout the 1990s.

During the 1992 U.S. presidential campaign, Clinton harshly criticized Bush’s policy toward China, charging that Bush had “coddled the dictators.” He also pledged to condition China’s access to the U.S. market on an improved human rights record.¹³⁵ After defeating Bush in the election and assuming the presidency, Clinton discovered that it was difficult to fulfill this campaign promise. In May 1993, Clinton announced that China would have to meet seven conditions for improved human rights in order to obtain extension of its most favored nation (MFN) trading status with the United States beyond July 3, 1994. Clinton soon recognized, however, that applying pressure on China over human rights issues diminished, rather than enhanced, his ability to obtain China’s cooperation on both economic and security issues. As it sought to resist pressure on human rights, China had its own sources of leverage. In the economic realm, China sought to build support among the U.S. business community by offering access to its large market if bilateral relations developed satisfactorily, but threatening to do business with U.S. competitors if they did not. Likewise, China made clear that its cooperation on security issues would depend on maintaining a good bilateral relationship.¹³⁶

By September, Clinton accepted the recommendation of Winston Lord, the assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, that the administration adopt a policy of “comprehensive engagement” of China.¹³⁷ In May 1994, with the deadline approaching to decide

¹³⁴ 李静杰：《中俄战略协作伙伴关系及其美国因素》，第 11 页 [Li Jingjie, “China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations and the American Factor,” 11].

¹³⁵ Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams*, 33.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid, 33, 41.

on China's MFN status, Clinton announced that he would break the linkage with human rights that he had announced one year earlier. He acknowledged that China had not made satisfactory progress on human rights, but he argued that the best way to promote human rights in China was through engagement, including increased trade, contacts, and dialogue.¹³⁸ A combination of economic and strategic factors prompted this decision. Economic factors were paramount at this stage, as U.S.-China economic ties were growing rapidly, though China's MFN status remained subject to annual renewal by Congress until the country received the status permanently in 1998.

Overall, cooperation on security issues continued to be a weak link in the U.S.-China relationship.¹³⁹ However, the United States and China achieved modest cooperation in addressing North Korea's pursuit of nuclear weapons. On the one hand, China worked to prevent mention of sanctions in resolutions by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors and the UN Security Council. On the other hand, China abstained from these resolutions rather than vetoing them when they came up for votes. China's unwillingness to use its veto power in the Security Council to protect North Korea unconditionally may have increased pressure on the regime in Pyongyang to come to the negotiating table.¹⁴⁰ Ultimately, however, the Agreed Framework signed in October 1994 was a U.S.-North Korea bilateral accord to which China's contribution was marginal.¹⁴¹ Russia played only a peripheral role the 1994 crisis, having lost much of its influence over the North Korean regime after establishing official diplomatic relations with South Korea. From China's perspective, Russia's marginalization demonstrated the costs of

¹³⁸ Ibid, 45.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Thomas J. Christensen, *The China Challenge: Shaping the Choices of a Rising Power* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2015), 186-187.

¹⁴¹ One senior Clinton White House official said that China had gotten more credit for this accord than it deserved. See Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams*, 84, 400n56. See also Rozman, *Chinese Strategic Thought Toward Asia*, 79.

its overly pro-Western orientation. Russia largely agreed with China's approach toward North Korea and gradually increased cooperation with China on this issue.¹⁴²

In an environment in which China worried about both the U.S. preponderance of power and particular U.S. foreign policy decisions, the leaders in Beijing remained open to increased cooperation with Russia. Within about two years of the Soviet collapse, the scholarly community in China had reached a rough consensus reaffirming Deng's view that Russia would be one of the "poles" in the emerging multipolar world.¹⁴³ Scholars disagreed among themselves about domestic trends within Russia, with some arguing that the failure of liberal reform had resulted in the rise of nationalism, but others contending that Russia's domestic politics had stabilized and begun to develop in a steady fashion.¹⁴⁴ Regardless of their views on Russia's domestic political development, Chinese scholars agreed that Russia would draw closer to China because of ongoing tensions in its relations with the West. In order to reestablish its position as a great power in Eurasia, Russia would have to place increased emphasis on the Asia-Pacific region, especially its relations with China.¹⁴⁵ These developments, in the view of many Chinese scholars, had helped to lay the foundation for a strong China-Russia partnership.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² Rozman, *Chinese Strategic Thought Toward Asia*, 102.

¹⁴³ Pillsbury, *China Debates the Future Security Environment*, 156.

¹⁴⁴ For scholars arguing that Russia's liberal reforms had failed, see "美俄关系研讨会纪要"《现代国际关系》1994年第11期,第2-25页["Summary of the Seminar on U.S.-Russian Relations," *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* 11 (1994), 2-25]. For the view that Russia had entered a period of relatively stable development, see 潘德礼 [Pan Deli]:《1993年俄罗斯政治形势回顾和前景分析》,《东欧中亚研究》1994年第1期,第59-63页["A Look Back at the 1993 Russian Political Situation and Analysis of Prospects," *Dongou Zhongya Yanjiu* 1994 (1): 59-63]. Both sources are cited in Li Jingjie, "From Good Neighbors to Strategic Partners," 79-80, 96n17-18.

¹⁴⁵ 荣旻:《析俄罗斯外交实践的新特点》《东欧中亚研究》1994年第2期,第50-53页[Rong Min, "Analysis of New Features in the Practice of Russia's Diplomacy," *Dongou Zhongya Yanjiu* 1994 (2): 50-53]; 顾关福, 田润锋:《演进中的俄罗斯对外政策》,《现代国际关系》1994年第8期,第2-6页[Gu Guanfu, Tian Runfeng, "Russia's Foreign Policy in Changing Course," *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* 1994 (8): 2-6.] Both sources are cited in Li Jingjie, "From Good Neighbors to Strategic Partners," 80-81, 96n19-20.

¹⁴⁶ 姚文彬 [Yao Wenbin]:《中国和俄罗斯在亚太地区的政策和安全利益》,《东欧中亚研究》1994年第4期,第28-30页[Yao Wenbin, "The Policies and Security Interests of China and Russia in the Asia-Pacific Region," *Dongou Zhongya Yanjiu* 1994 (4): 28-30]. Cited in Alexei D. Voskressenski, "Russia's Evolving Grand Strategy Toward China," in *Rapprochement or Rivalry? Russia-China Relations in a Changing Asia*, ed. Sherman W. Garnett (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2000), 125, 143n21.

China and Russia find a “common voice” on international issues

By the end of 1992, China and Russia had put their bilateral relationship back on track following a brief period in the wake of the Soviet collapse when China worried about Russia's tilt toward the West. In 1993 and 1994, China and Russia advanced their relationship by emphasizing, for the first time, their shared views on many international issues in the post-Cold War period. This would become a theme of China-Russia relations in this new era, though the two countries, at this stage as during later periods, confined the expression of their common views to declarations rather than forming a military alliance. China had been interested in cooperation with Russia on international issues since the collapse of the Soviet Union, but Russia initially resisted this approach because it sought to build close relations with the West. The beginning of discussions about NATO expansion in late 1993, and particularly the clear shift in U.S. policy in favor of expansion during 1994, coincided with the emergence of efforts by China and Russia to speak with a common voice on a range of international issues.

During 1993, China and Russia held no meeting of heads of state, largely because of the domestic political turmoil in Russia that year. Having been “burned” by their support for the failed coup in August 1991, Chinese leaders took a wait-and-see approach while Russia's domestic political conflict unfolded in 1993. This proved to be the only year following 1992 in which the two countries' leaders did not meet.¹⁴⁷ Starting in 1994, however, Russia began to strive for greater balance in its foreign policy, placing special emphasis on strengthening relations with China.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ Лукин. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 310 [Lukin, “From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 310].

¹⁴⁸ Бажанов. Российско-китайские отношения на современном этапе. С. 419 [Bazhanov, “The Contemporary Stage of Russia-China Relations,” 419].

In late January 1994, about six weeks after Zhirinovsky's surprise showing in the Russian parliamentary elections and about two weeks after Clinton said that NATO expansion was a matter of not whether but when, Kozyrev visited China. During this trip, in contrast with statements early in his tenure that emphasized Russia's Western orientation, he stressed the importance of friendly relations with China.¹⁴⁹ Kozyrev also delivered to Jiang Zemin a letter from Yeltsin in which the Russian president proposed that China and Russia form "constructive partnership relations" oriented toward the 21st century.¹⁵⁰ As 1994 progressed, Russia elaborated on this proposal. In June, the Russian ambassador to China, Sergei Rogachev, gave an interview to *People's Daily* in which he outlined the proposed content of "constructive partnership relations." He said that China and Russia would enjoy full equality, with no division between "big brother" and "little brother" of the type that had marred the Sino-Soviet alliance of the 1950s. In the new era, China and Russia were both great powers with common goals in international relations, which he described as peace, security, and cooperation. Russia hoped to establish close, cooperative relations with China, especially in the Asia-Pacific region.¹⁵¹

Yeltsin's proposal received a favorable response from China.¹⁵² From September 2-6, 1994, Jiang Zemin made his first official visit as Chinese leader to Russia, where he and Yeltsin held the second meeting of the two countries' heads of states since the breakup of the Soviet Union.¹⁵³ This visit occurred a few weeks before Yeltsin's visit to Washington, when Clinton affirmed to the

¹⁴⁹ Лукин. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 310 [Lukin, "From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 310].

¹⁵⁰ 杨闯, 高飞, 冯玉军著: 《百年中俄关系》, 第 318 页 [Yang Chuang, Gao Fei, Feng Yujun, eds., *One Hundred Years of China-Russia Relations*, 318].

¹⁵¹ 《人民日报》, 1993 年 6 月 3 日, 见杨闯, 高飞, 冯玉军著: 《百年中俄关系》, 第 318-319 页 [Yang Chuang, Gao Fei, Feng Yujun, eds., *One Hundred Years of China-Russia Relations*, 318-319].

¹⁵² 李静杰: 《中俄战略协作伙伴关系及其美国因素》, 第 10 页 [Li Jingjie, "China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations and the American Factor," 10].

¹⁵³ 杨闯, 高飞, 冯玉军著: 《百年中俄关系》, 第 319-321 页 [Yang Chuang, Gao Fei, Feng Yujun, eds., *One Hundred Years of China-Russia Relations*, 319-321].

Russian president that NATO expansion would occur but promised that the names of new member states and timetables for accession would not be announced before the 1996 presidential election in Russia. As Yeltsin had suggested, China and Russia upgraded their relationship during Jiang's visit to Moscow from that of "friendly countries," as expressed in the 1992 joint declaration, to "constructive partnership relations oriented toward the 21st century."¹⁵⁴

In contrast with Yeltsin's visit to China in December 1992, when China and Russia omitted mention of international issues in their joint declaration, this time the two countries indicated their desire to "strengthen cooperation in international affairs, including cooperation in resolving global issues" and emphasized that they sought to "oppose hegemonism and power politics and oppose the establishment of confrontational political, military, and economic groupings."¹⁵⁵ As one Chinese scholar dryly notes, "There is no need to state that 'hegemonism and power politics' here referred to the United States."¹⁵⁶ The reference to military and political groupings referred not only to NATO, but also to the U.S.-Japan security alliance, which soon received an upgrade.¹⁵⁷ Nevertheless, China and Russia declared that their relationship was not an alliance and insisted that it was not directed at any third party. The joint declaration also asserted that a multipolar world was taking shape.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ 《中俄联合声明》1994年9月3日 ["China-Russia Joint Declaration," September 3, 1994], 见李静杰: 《中俄战略协作和中美俄“三角关系”》, 第43页, [cited in Li Jingjie, "China-Russia Strategic Cooperation and China-U.S.-Russia 'Triangular Relations'," 43].

¹⁵⁵ 《中俄联合声明》1994年9月3日 ["China-Russia Joint Declaration," September 3, 1994]; 见李静杰: 《中俄战略协作伙伴关系及其美国因素》, 第10页 [Cited in Li Jingjie, "China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations and the American Factor," 10].

¹⁵⁶ 李静杰: 《中俄战略协作和中美俄“三角关系”》, 第46页, [Li Jingjie, "China-Russia Strategic Cooperation and China-U.S.-Russia 'Triangular Relations'," 46].

¹⁵⁷ 李静杰: 《中俄战略协作伙伴关系及其美国因素》, 第10页 [Li Jingjie, "China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations and the American Factor," 10].

¹⁵⁸ 《中俄联合声明》1994年9月3日 ["China-Russia Joint Declaration, September 3, 1994].

In a sign of their warming relations, China and Russia reached symbolically important understandings on nuclear weapons during Jiang's visit. Russia's first post-Soviet military doctrine, which was promulgated in November 1993, had abandoned the pledge of no first use of nuclear weapons that Brezhnev first made in 1982. Many analysts viewed this change as an effort to establish nuclear deterrence against potential aggressors, especially China.¹⁵⁹ During Jiang's visit to Moscow, however, China and Russia pledged no first use of nuclear weapons in their bilateral relations. They also agreed not to target their nuclear warheads at each other.¹⁶⁰

China and Russia also addressed issues in bilateral relations during this visit. Despite a 50 percent surge in bilateral trade during 1992, the first full year following the Soviet collapse, overall trade volumes remained modest. The volume of bilateral trade reached \$5.8 billion in 1992 and \$7.7 billion in 1993 before falling back to \$5.1 billion in 1994.¹⁶¹ As in later periods, bilateral economic ties lagged behind the development of political relations. The two countries also reached agreement on the demarcation of their short western border. Upon the conclusion of this accord, which followed a May 1991 agreement establishing the principles for demarcating the long eastern border, the two countries had agreed upon the demarcation of 98 percent of their 2,600-mile border, with only some tricky issues along the eastern section yet to be resolved.¹⁶² Progress in border demarcation, which had eluded the two countries during the Cold War, was an essential step in maintaining friendly bilateral relations. It was also a necessary precondition for potential future

¹⁵⁹ Serge Schmemmann, "Russia Drops Pledge of No First Use of Atom Arms," *New York Times*, November 4, 1993; Sherman W. Garnett, "Introduction: Limited Partnership," in *Rapprochement or Rivalry? Russia-China Relations in a Changing Asia*, ed. Sherman W. Garnett (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2000), 8-9.

¹⁶⁰ Sherman Garnett, "Challenges of the Sino-Russian Strategic Partnership," *The Washington Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (Autumn 2001): 45-46; Sherman W. Garnett, "Introduction: Limited Partnership," 8-9.

¹⁶¹ Лукин. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 312-373, Таблица 4.1 [Lukin, "From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 312-373, Table 1].

¹⁶² 杨闯, 高飞, 冯玉军著: 《百年中俄关系》, 第 319-321 页 [Yang Chuang, Gao Fei, Feng Yujun, eds., *One Hundred Years of China-Russia Relations*, 319-321].

cooperation on international issues. The border negotiations aroused some domestic opposition in Russia, especially in the Russian Far East. These concerns were particularly acute when coupled with concerns about Chinese immigration and Russia's own version of the "China threat theory." Despite these concerns, Yeltsin pressed ahead in improving relations with China.¹⁶³

Officials and scholars in both China and Russia argue that the momentum in favor of NATO expansion in the United States during 1993 and 1994 contributed to the strengthening of China-Russia relations during this period. Igor Morgulov, a Russian diplomat with long experience in Asia-Pacific issues, argues that "this process of movement toward China from the end of 1993 to the beginning of 1994, of course, went in parallel with the cooling of our relations with the West."¹⁶⁴ China, which had been interested in strengthening relations with Russia since the time of the Soviet collapse, sensed an opportunity, perceiving that Russia viewed NATO expansion as an attempt to "squeeze Russia's strategic space" and "force Russia out of Europe."¹⁶⁵ "In this way," one Chinese scholar writes, "China and Russia found a common voice on international issues."¹⁶⁶

This common voice found expression in joint declarations, but not in the formation of an alliance. Both countries perceived that a China-Russia alliance would be insufficient to balance U.S. power, and the costs and risks would exceed the benefits. Moreover, both countries

¹⁶³ Elizabeth Wishnick, *Mending Fences: The Evolution of Moscow's China Policy from Brezhnev to Yeltsin* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 151-186.

¹⁶⁴ Актуальные проблемы российско-китайских отношений и пути их решения. Аналитические доклады НКСМИ МГИМО(У) МИД России. Вып. 1(16). Март 2006. С. 319 [*Current Problems in Russia-China Relations and Paths to their Resolution*. Analytical reports of Scientific-coordinating Council on International Research, Moscow State Institute for International Relations (University), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, Issue 1(16), March 2006, 319]. Цит. по: Лукин. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 319 [Cited in Lukin, "From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 319].

¹⁶⁵ 李静杰:《中俄战略协作伙伴关系及其美国因素》,第10-11页[Li Jingjie, "China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations and the American Factor," 10-11]; 李静杰:《中俄战略协作和中美俄“三角关系”》,第46页,[Li Jingjie, "China-Russia Strategic Cooperation and China-U.S.-Russia 'Triangular Relations'," 46].

¹⁶⁶ 李静杰:《中俄战略协作和中美俄“三角关系”》,第46页,[Li Jingjie, "China-Russia Strategic Cooperation and China-U.S.-Russia 'Triangular Relations'," 46].

maintained a strong stake in their relations with the United States. Russia continued to seek productive relations with the United States throughout Yeltsin's presidency, though Yeltsin became increasingly disillusioned with the United States over time. China, despite its concerns about U.S. power and disputes with Washington on a range of issues, continued to benefit from expanded economic ties with the United States. Therefore, even as China and Russia grew closer in 1993 and 1994, their mutual support remained largely rhetorical. They were unwilling to take steps that would result in an open break in relations with the United States. This trend continued during the next two years, culminating in the 1996 announcement of the China-Russia strategic partnership.

Toward the Formation of a Strategic Partnership (1995-1996)

Russia seeks closer ties with China

In 1995 and 1996, a combination of international and domestic political factors pushed Russia into a closer relationship with China, a "strategic partnership" that the two countries announced in April 1996. On the international front, Yeltsin's outburst in Budapest in December 1994 had made clear the depths of Russia's frustration with the prospect of NATO expansion. This issue remained the chief irritant in U.S.-Russia relations, but other issues caused tension as well. Also in December 1994, Russian armed forces invaded Chechnya, which had been effectively self-governing since the breakup of the Soviet Union, with the goal of bringing the republic back under central control. The United States was initially supportive of Russia's efforts to preserve its territorial integrity, but eventually became more critical of the Russian war effort as reports of brutal Russian behavior mounted. China, by contrast, offered Russia its full support on what it considered an internal affair. Russia's agreement to build nuclear reactors at Bushehr, Iran, which

U.S. officials feared could assist Iran's efforts to acquire nuclear weapons, also became a troublesome issue in U.S.-Russia relations.

During this same period, however, the United States and Russia achieved cooperation on some issues. Despite their disagreements on Bosnia, they agreed to an arrangement for Russian forces to participate in the Implementation Force following the November 1995 Dayton Accords. The United States also agreed to Russia's requested modifications of the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty, which had been negotiated before the collapse of the Soviet Union. On the issue of NATO expansion, the United States pursued a "two-track" approach. On the one hand, it prepared for NATO expansion, but on the other hand, it sought to assuage Russian concerns and to build a new relationship between Russia and the alliance. This approach eventually achieved results, but only in 1997, after Yeltsin had been safely re-elected.

During this period, domestic political concerns became paramount in Russia. Yeltsin faced re-election in July 1996, and initially his prospects looked dim. A poll taken in January 1996 showed his support in single digits.¹⁶⁷ Yeltsin's standing had suffered from increasing public resentment toward the West. Russians blamed the West for neglecting Russian national interests and for what was, in their view, failed economic advice that had resulted in shock therapy, corrupt privatization schemes, and widespread suffering among ordinary people. Between 1993 and 1995, the share of people viewing the United States as a threat had increased from 26 percent to 44 percent among the public and from 27 percent to 53 percent among elites.¹⁶⁸

The greatest threat to Yeltsin's re-election prospects came from Gennady Zyuganov, the leader of the Communist Party of Russia. In contrast with the 1993 parliamentary elections, when

¹⁶⁷ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 146.

¹⁶⁸ William Zimmerman, *The Russian People and Foreign Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 91. Cited in Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy*, 57-94.

Zhirinovksy's Liberal Democratic Party had performed strongly, it was the Communists who made the most impressive showing in the December 1995 parliamentary elections, capturing 22.1 percent of the vote.¹⁶⁹ Fearing a return of communism in Russia, the Clinton administration sought to assist Yeltsin, whom Clinton and his advisers still considered the best chance for democratic and market reform in Russia. Clinton also had his own domestic political reasons for wanting to assist Yeltsin. With Clinton himself facing re-election in November 1996, he hoped to avoid facing the charge that communism had returned to Russia on his watch. For these reasons, the Clinton administration decided to postpone announcement of the names of potential new NATO member states, as well as a timetable for accession, until after the Russian presidential election. Yeltsin's opponents, including the Communists, were highly critical of Yeltsin's foreign policy. In particular, the Communists faulted Yeltsin for being too accommodating of Western policies. They called for closer ties with China as a means of resisting the West.¹⁷⁰ In response to these political pressures, Yeltsin adjusted his foreign policy and once again took the initiative in strengthening relations with China. It was Yeltsin who, during his flight to China in April 1996, decided to suggest that the two countries upgrade their relationship to a "strategic partnership."

Talbott, who had opposed concrete steps toward NATO expansion leading up to the January 1994 summit, took control of the two-track U.S. policy in early 1995. His goal was to ensure that neither track—neither NATO expansion nor relations with Russia—got too far ahead of the other. In January 1995, in conversations with his Russian interlocutor, deputy foreign minister Georgi Mamedov, Talbott proposed both a NATO-Russia accord and a NATO-Russia standing commission that would give Russia an institutional relationship with the alliance, though

¹⁶⁹ McFaul, *Russia's Unfinished Revolution*, 286.

¹⁷⁰ Лукин. Медведь наблюдает за драконом. С. 367-373 [Lukin, *The Bear Watches the Dragon* (Russian edition), 367-373].

no direct influence in its decision-making process. In February, Mamedov told Talbott that Russia could accept NATO expansion, provided that the alliance stationed no NATO troops or nuclear weapons on the new member states' territory.¹⁷¹ Yeltsin quickly disavowed this position, however, saying that he had not approved it. In March, during a speech to members of the Russian military, Yeltsin accused his foreign ministry of "gross blunders" in its handling of NATO expansion, particularly the suggestion that Russia would accept expansion in return for the pledges on troops and nuclear weapons. Yeltsin assured his military that opposition to NATO expansion remained Russia's position.¹⁷² U.S. officials recognized that Russian domestic politics required Yeltsin to hold firm on this position at least until the July 1996 presidential election.¹⁷³

Clinton visited Moscow in May 1995 to attend ceremonies marking the 50th anniversary of the Allied victory in World War II. During their summit meeting, Clinton and Yeltsin agreed to disagree on NATO expansion. Clinton told Yeltsin that the alliance's expansion was irreversible and rebuffed the Russian president's request that the alliance delay expansion until after 2000. Yeltsin agreed to proceed with Russia's involvement in the Partnership for Peace.¹⁷⁴ This summit at least managed to repair the damage from the contentious meeting in Budapest the previous December. Further progress in relations between NATO and Russia, however, would have to wait until after the Russian presidential election the following year. NATO's study on expansion, which was released in September 1995, made clear to Russia that no country would have a veto over the alliance's expansion, that the alliance had no need to station troops on the territory of new member states but reserved the right to do so if necessary, and that the new member states would enjoy the

¹⁷¹ Goldgeier, *Not Whether But When*, 90.

¹⁷² Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 196-197.

¹⁷³ Goldgeier, *Not Whether But When*, 90.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 90-91.

full security guarantee under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, including the nuclear umbrella.¹⁷⁵

In addition to the Clinton administration's desire to help Yeltsin win re-election, the ongoing war in Bosnia delayed NATO expansion. As long as the war raged on, it was difficult for the United States and its NATO allies to argue that the alliance's expansion would promote the cause of peace in Europe. The November 1995 Dayton Accords, which ended the war in Bosnia, therefore also helped to clear the path for NATO expansion. The end of fighting also made possible a successful case of U.S.-Russia cooperation, as the two countries agreed to Russia's participation in the Implementation Force in Bosnia. Russia refused to allow its armed forces to serve under NATO command. However, it agreed to a plan in which Russian forces would serve under an American general, but not under the NATO chain of command.¹⁷⁶

In 1996, Russia's attention turned to the upcoming presidential election. Many of Yeltsin's critics, including Zyuganov, his chief rival, accused him of failing to assert Russia's national interests effectively in relations with the West. In response to these criticisms, Yeltsin sought to strengthen his nationalist credentials by adjusting Russia's foreign policy. The most visible sign of this adjustment was his decision to replace Kozyrev with a new foreign minister, Yevgeny Primakov, in January 1996. Primakov's views contrasted sharply with Kozyrev's. He criticized the "defeatist" democratic politicians who believed that Russia, having lost the Cold War, should establish a relationship with the United States similar to that of Germany and Japan following their defeat in World War II.¹⁷⁷ In contrast to the pro-Western foreign policy of Russia's early democrats, Primakov insisted that Russia should be an equal partner with the West rather than a client.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, 95.

¹⁷⁶ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 200.

¹⁷⁷ Примаков Е. Годы в Большой Политике. М.: Совершенно Секретно, 1999. С. 207-208 [Yevgeny Primakov, *Years in Big Politics* (Moscow: Sovershenno Sekretno, 1999), 207-208].

Primakov favored a Eurasianist foreign policy that emphasized Russia's need, given its geographic location in both Europe and Asia, to act as an independent great power with interests in both the West and the East.¹⁷⁸ In his memoirs, Primakov later wrote that Russia should adhere to the dictum that "there are no permanent enemies, but there exist permanent national interests."¹⁷⁹ He also believed that the trend toward world multipolarity, which he supported, had begun long before the end of the Cold War and would continue in the post-Soviet era.¹⁸⁰ In these circumstances, Russia should pursue an "active" and "pragmatic" foreign policy in all directions.¹⁸¹

Another step forward in the adjustment of Russian foreign policy came in April 1996, when China and Russia upgraded their relationship to a "strategic partnership" during Yeltsin's visit to Beijing. As in 1994, it was Yeltsin who took the initiative and suggested the new language. China continued to be receptive to Russia's diplomacy, especially because a series of disputes arose in U.S.-China relations during the period leading up to Yeltsin's visit.

China's receptiveness to Russian diplomacy amid growing U.S.-China tensions

Between the time of Jiang Zemin's visit to Moscow in September 1994, when China and Russia upgraded their relationship to a "comprehensive partnership," and Yeltsin's visit to Beijing in April 1996, when the two countries further upgraded relations to a "strategic partnership," a series of events caused friction in U.S.-China relations. During this period, China engaged in increasingly assertive behavior internationally, especially in the South China Sea and toward Taiwan.¹⁸² China's assertion of its territorial claims in the South China Sea strained relations with

¹⁷⁸ Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 26.

¹⁷⁹ Примаков. Годы в Большой Политике. С. 212 [Primakov, *Years in Big Politics*, 212].

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 209.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 207-221.

¹⁸² Goldstein, "Structural Realism and China's Foreign Policy," 137; Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, 47.

the Philippines, a U.S. ally, in 1995. The revision of the U.S.-Japan alliance during this period caused concern among Chinese leaders. This issue became entangled with ongoing tensions over Taiwan, as Chinese leaders grew concerned about the possibility that Japan might intervene in a potential military conflict over the island. These concerns became especially acute when the Taiwan dispute escalated into a crisis in March 1996. Thus in 1995 and 1996, as one Chinese scholar writes, “the bowstring of China-U.S. relations was constantly pulled taut, almost to the limit.”¹⁸³

Strategic concerns therefore pushed China and Russia closer together by early 1996. The perception by both countries that the United States sought to apply increased strategic pressure, on Russia through NATO expansion and on China through the upgrading of the U.S.-Japan alliance, served as a catalyst for the formation of the China-Russia strategic partnership that year. Concerns about national identity in both countries were also an important factor in their diplomatic convergence. Russia bristled at Western criticism of its military campaign in Chechnya, and China responded harshly to what it viewed as excessive U.S. support for pro-independence forces on Taiwan.¹⁸⁴ Rising tensions in U.S.-China relations offered China an incentive to strengthen relations with other countries, especially Russia, with the goal of offsetting, at least partially, the U.S. power advantage. Soon, however, growing concerns among other Asian countries about China’s growing power and uncertain intentions spurred China to adjust its grand strategy in an effort to offer its neighbors greater reassurance, as discussed in the next chapter.

The Mischief Reef incident of 1995 brought China and the Philippines into conflict over their competing claims in the Spratly Islands, arousing regional concerns about China’s intentions

¹⁸³ 吴大辉：《中俄战略协作伙伴关系：十年实践的历史考察》，《俄罗斯中亚东欧研究》2006年第3期，第2页 [Wu Dahui, “China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations: Historical Observations on Ten Years of Practice,” *Eluosi Zhongya Dongou Yanjiu* 2006 (3): 2].

¹⁸⁴ Rozman, *The Sino-Russian Challenge to the World Order*, 274.

in the South China Sea.¹⁸⁵ After months of rising tensions, including both countries' arrests of fisherman from the other side, the Philippines accused China in February of stationing armed vessels at and building structures on the reef, all in an effort to establish control of the territory in violation of international law. China denied the charges, claiming that the structures were shelters for fishermen. This was the first time that China had actively asserted its claims in the South China Sea against any country other than Vietnam. The Philippines lacked the military capability to press its case, so it sought support from the international community and from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). China rejected efforts to negotiate the issue in multilateral formats, insisting upon bilateral negotiations with the Philippines. The United States sought to stay out of this dispute. However, it reminded China of the U.S. treaty obligation to defend the Philippines against attack, and U.S. officials also reiterated their determination to protect freedom of navigation in the South China Sea. China and the Philippines diffused the immediate tension by agreeing on a bilateral code of conduct for settling their disputes, but China's South China Sea disputes remained a long-term source of tension.¹⁸⁶

The strengthening of the U.S.-Japan alliance during the 1990s aroused considerable concern in China.¹⁸⁷ Because of North Korea's pursuit of nuclear weapons and its political instability following the July 1994 death of Kim Il Sung, who had led the country for more than forty years, the United States became increasingly concerned about the possibility of military conflict on the Korean peninsula. In such a contingency, the United States would rely heavily on its military bases in Japan. American policymakers and defense planners, however, were uncertain as to how much support they could expect from Japan, given the restrictions that the Japanese

¹⁸⁵ Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, 110.

¹⁸⁶ Mark J. Valencia, *China and the South China Sea Disputes*, Adelphi Paper 298 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, October 1995), 6, 25-30, 44-48.

¹⁸⁷ Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, 105.

constitution imposed on the country's military activities. With domestic Japanese support for U.S. military bases in the country weakening, the United States sought to ensure its continued access. American officials also sought to ensure that the alliance with Japan maintained U.S. domestic support, which they expected would decline sharply if Japan's assistance in a potential armed conflict on the Korean peninsula were to prove unsatisfactory. For these and other reasons, the United States and Japan initiated discussions on how to strengthen their alliance. On the U.S. side, Joseph S. Nye Jr., the assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs, led this review, which became known as the "Nye Initiative." The review, which began during the fall of 1994, resulted in the April 1996 bilateral declaration that strengthened the alliance, followed by the announcement of the U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines in September 1997.¹⁸⁸

China supported the U.S.-Japan alliance during the 1970s and 1980s, when its target was the Soviet Union. Following the breakup of the Soviet Union, China continued to perceive some utility in the U.S.-Japan alliance because it prevented Japan's full remilitarization, including its potential acquisition of nuclear weapons. As the 1990s progressed, however, China became increasingly concerned that the new purpose of the U.S.-Japan alliance was to contain China and frustrate its ambitions to reunify Taiwan with the mainland. The alliance's upgrading during the 1990s heightened these concerns. Following protracted negotiations, the United States and Japan reached agreement by early 1996 on the broad outlines of a plan to strengthen the alliance. During Clinton's visit to Japan in April 1996, he and Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto issued a joint declaration on the alliance's future. The two countries also pledged to draft U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines that would specify the nature of Japan's expected future contributions. By the

¹⁸⁸ Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams*, 236-237. For the text of the April 1996 declaration, see "Japan-U.S. Joint Declaration on Security Alliance for the 21st Century." *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan*, April 17, 1996, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/security/security.html>

time of the Clinton-Hashimoto declaration, events in Taiwan had altered the context of the alliance's upgrade and caused Chinese leaders to see it in an increasingly skeptical light.¹⁸⁹

The dispute over Taiwan escalated between mid-1995 and early 1996. During this period, China maintained its displeasure with U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, which China considered part of a U.S. plan to encircle China.¹⁹⁰ In 1994, the United States and Taiwan had upgraded their relations.¹⁹¹ In 1995, Lee Teng-hui, the president of Taiwan, requested a visa to attend a private function in his personal capacity at his alma mater, Cornell University, in June. The Clinton administration was initially reluctant to grant the request because it wanted to assure China that U.S. ties with Taiwan remained unofficial. Ultimately, under pressure from Congress, Clinton relented and granted Lee the visa. China viewed this decision as a betrayal, especially following a period in which Jiang Zemin had pursued flexible policies in cross-Strait relations. Now Jiang faced domestic political criticism for being too soft on Taiwan. China responded with a series of military and diplomatic measures, most notably by expanding the scope and scale of military exercises that had already been scheduled for the second half of 1995 and early 1996 near the Taiwan Strait. In late July, China held military exercises in the region featuring what it called "missile tests." China carried out a second set of tests and exercises in advance of the March 23, 1996 presidential election on Taiwan. From March 8-15, China launched missiles toward offshore impact areas close to Taiwan. Chinese forces conducted additional live-fire exercises between March 12 and 25.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams*, 236-238; Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, 105-107.

¹⁹⁰ Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, 7.

¹⁹¹ Winston Lord, Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Taiwan Policy Review, Statement before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Washington, D.C., September 27, 1994, <https://www.ait.org.tw/en/19940927-taiwan-policy-review-by-winston-lord.html>

¹⁹² Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams*, 46-53.

The Clinton administration responded by calling China's behavior "reckless and provocative" and ordering the dispatch of two aircraft carrier battle groups to the waters off Taiwan, though not into the Taiwan Strait itself. Although neither the United States nor China expected the crisis to escalate to armed conflict, Secretary of Defense William Perry warned Vice Foreign Minister Liu Huaqiu, who was visiting Washington at the time of the tests, that "grave consequences" would follow if China's weapons struck Taiwan. The crisis demonstrated that the Taiwan issue had the potential to cause a rapid deterioration in U.S.-China relations and therefore required careful management.¹⁹³ These events also colored China's perceptions of the following month's Clinton-Hashimoto declaration upgrading the U.S.-Japan alliance. Chinese leaders became increasingly convinced that China was the target of the alliance. They feared that the alliance could facilitate joint intervention by the United States and Japan in a possible future conflict over Taiwan.¹⁹⁴

As discussed in the next chapter, the international reaction to these events spurred China, starting in mid-1996, to adopt a new grand strategy. China had become concerned that the United States, by strengthening its alliances with Asian countries that were alarmed by China's behavior, could lay the groundwork for a long-term strategy of encirclement of China.¹⁹⁵ In the spring of 1996, however, this series of events reinforced China's willingness to strengthen relations with Russia.

¹⁹³ Ibid, 53-55.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 238.

¹⁹⁵ Goldstein, "Structural Realism and China's Foreign Policy," 137-138; Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, 24.

China and Russia form a “strategic partnership”

Chinese and Russian scholars broadly agree that by the mid-1990s, shared strategic concerns had pushed the two countries closer together. These concerns focused on both the structure of the international system and on specific U.S. foreign policy initiatives that China and Russia opposed. At the level of the international system, the change in the global balance of power in favor of the United States and at the expense of China and Russia encouraged the strengthening of relations between the latter two.¹⁹⁶ At the level of policy, both countries asserted that U.S. actions were subjecting them to undue strategic pressure. For Russia, the main irritant was NATO expansion. For China, the primary concerns were the strengthening of the U.S.-Japan alliance and, relatedly, rising tensions over Taiwan.¹⁹⁷ China had its own concerns about NATO expansion, viewing it as a U.S. effort to consolidate its global hegemony and, potentially, to threaten China from the west.¹⁹⁸

In 1995 and 1996, China-Russia relations continued to improve. In May 1995, during Jiang Zemin’s visit to Moscow to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of victory in World War II, China

¹⁹⁶ Бажанов. Российско-китайские отношения на современном этапе. С. 418-422 [Bazhanov, “The Contemporary Stage of Russia-China Relations,” 418-422].

¹⁹⁷ 杨闯, 高飞, 冯玉军著: 《百年中俄关系》, 第 334 页 [Yang Chuang, Gao Fei, Feng Yujun, eds., *One Hundred Years of China-Russia Relations*, 334]; 李静杰: 《中俄战略协作伙伴关系及其美国因素》, 第 11 页 [Li Jingjie, “China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations and the American Factor,” 11]; 吴大辉: 《中俄战略协作伙伴关系: 十年实践的历史考察》, 第 2 页 [Wu Dahui, “China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations: Historical Observations on Ten Years of Practice,” *Eluosi Zhongya Dongou Yanjiu* 2006 (3): 2]. For an argument that the Taiwan crisis of March 1996 pushed China into more active cooperation with Russia, see Лекция № 69. Изменение международных позиции России в связи с первым расширением НАТО. Как «тайваньский мини-кризис» повлиял на российско-китайские отношения? // Богатуров А.Д., Аверков В.В. История Международных Отношений (1945-2008 гг.). Москва: Издательство «МГИМО-Университет», 2009. С. 445-447 [“Lecture No. 9: Changes in the international position of Russia in connection with the first expansion of NATO. How did the ‘Taiwan mini-crisis’ affect Russia-China relations?” in A.D. Bogaturov, V.V. Averkov, *The History of International Relations (1945-2008)* (Moscow: MGIMO University, 2009), 445-447].

¹⁹⁸ Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, 138; Тренин Д.В. Китайская проблема России // М.: Московский Центр Карнеги, 1998 г. С. 21 [Dmitri Trenin, *Russia’s China Problem* (Moscow: Moscow Carnegie Center, 1998), 21].

and Russia reaffirmed their commitment to strengthened relations.¹⁹⁹ Neither country sought the formation of an alliance with the other. Both maintained an interest in productive relations with the United States, despite their concerns about U.S. power and intentions. Their goals, rather, were to use the China-Russia relationship to offer diplomatic resistance to U.S. “hegemonism,” to promote world multipolarity, and, more concretely, to gain some bargaining power in relations with the United States.

By the mid-1990s, several factors motivated Russia to pay increased attention to the Asia-Pacific region, especially to China. The necessity of maintaining good bilateral relations with China, which was the original motivation for Russia to improve relations in 1992, continued to be an important consideration. Writing in 1995, two high-ranking officials at the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterated that maintaining friendly relations with China was a “categorical imperative” for Russia.²⁰⁰ In the authors’ view, relations had developed smoothly in the post-Soviet period. As Yeltsin and Jiang had said during their meeting in May 1995, no political contradictions existed between the two countries that would serve as obstacles to the development of relations.²⁰¹ Given the benefits of maintaining stable bilateral relations, as well as the high costs of poor relations that history had revealed, Russia would have seen strong incentives to maintain good working relations with China even in the absence of problematic relations with the United States.

International factors played a growing role in Russia’s policy toward China, however. The foreign ministry officials added that China and Russia held similar or congruent views on a range

¹⁹⁹ Li Jingjie, “From Good Neighbors to Strategic Partners,” 87.

²⁰⁰ Афанасьев Е.В., Логвинов Г.С. Россия и Китай: на пороге третьего тысячелетия // *Международная Жизнь*. 1995. — № 11-12. — С. 53 [E.V. Afanasyev, G.S. Logvinov, “Russia and China: On the Threshold of the Third Millennium,” *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn*’ 1995 (11/12): 53].

²⁰¹ *Ibid*, 51.

of international issues. On no international issue, in fact, did the two countries stand on “opposite sides of the barricades.”²⁰² The goal was not to form an alliance or bloc with China, but to increase Russia’s ability to act independently on the world stage. In the view of leading Russian experts on China, Russia’s foreign policy in the mid-1990s was largely an attempt to maintain “balance” and “equal distance” from centers of world power.²⁰³ Russia should view China as neither an ally nor an enemy, one scholar argued. An alliance with China, which China would not accept in any case, would incur the enmity of NATO, which was soon to expand, and curtail Russia’s access to technology and investment from the West. Attempting to join an anti-China axis would be even worse, this scholar argued, because it would pit Russia against a country with a population ten times the size of Russia’s and an economy that was rapidly outstripping Russia’s as well.²⁰⁴ Although Russia did not seek an alliance with China, it hoped to use its relationship with China as a counterweight to its “not always smooth relations with the West.”²⁰⁵ Maintaining friendly relations with China would guarantee that Russia, amid difficult relations with the West, would at least enjoy a stable “rear.”²⁰⁶ It might also give Russia some additional bargaining power in relations with the West. During a meeting at the Kremlin in July 1995, as quoted in Chapter 1, Yeltsin clearly articulated this logic: “Relations with China are extremely important for us from the point of view of global politics as well,” he said. “We can lean on the shoulder of China in relations with the United States. Then the West will start to treat Russia more respectfully.”²⁰⁷

²⁰² Ibid, 54.

²⁰³ Лукин. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 313 [Lukin, “From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 313].

²⁰⁴ Бажанов Е. П. Большой сосед — большие хлопоты // Новое время. 1996. — № 28. — С. 33. [E.P. Bazhanov, “Big Neighbor—Big troubles,” *Novoe Vremya* 26 (1998): 33].

²⁰⁵ Лукин. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 313 [Lukin, “From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 313].

²⁰⁶ Воскресенский А. Китай во внешнеполитической стратегии России // Свободная мысль. 1996. — № 1. — С. 102 [Alexey Voskressensky, “China in the Foreign Policy Strategy of Russia,” *Svobodnaya Mysl’* 1996 (1): 102].

²⁰⁷ Цит. по Бажанов. Российско-китайские отношения на современном этапе. С. 419 [Quoted in Bazhanov, “The Contemporary Stage of Russia-China Relations,” 419].

Chinese leaders focused on similar themes. They, too, recognized that bilateral issues alone provided a strong incentive to maintain good working relations with Russia. For China as for Russia, friendly bilateral relations provided a secure “rear.” This was essential for China’s security, especially in light of Cold War history. “Improving and maintaining the stability of the northern line of its geographical environment is an unchanging, fundamental security requirement of China’s diplomacy,” one Chinese scholar wrote. “Being able to establish stable bilateral relations, even to the extent of joining hands strategically with Russia, which shares a 4,300-kilometer border with China, is precisely the key to bringing about this diplomatic requirement.”²⁰⁸

China also continued to emphasize cooperation with Russia on international issues. Like their counterparts in Russia, Chinese leaders did not seek to form an alliance, but they believed that cooperation with Russia could serve, at least to some extent, as a counterweight to the overwhelming power of the United States.²⁰⁹ “China and Russia both regard the other as a pole exerting important influence in defending peace and stability in a world that is gradually becoming more multipolar,” one Chinese scholar wrote. “Both sides place great emphasis on the other side’s important balancing influence in the current world order.”²¹⁰ In March 1995, Jiang Zemin explained his views on China-Russia relations during a visit to Beijing by Kozyrev. “China and Russia are both great powers,” he said. “In the areas of opposing hegemonism and maintaining world peace, they bear a heavy responsibility, and they also have common interests.”²¹¹ When

²⁰⁸ 吴大辉：《中俄战略协作伙伴关系：十年实践的历史考察》，第2页 [Wu Dahui, “China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations: Historical Observations on Ten Years of Practice,” 2].

²⁰⁹ Goldstein, “Structural Realism and China’s Foreign Policy,” 137; Бажанов. Российско-китайские отношения на современном этапе. С. 419-420 [Bazhanov, “The Contemporary Stage of Russia-China Relations,” 419-420].

²¹⁰ 石泽：《论新时期的中俄关系》，《国际问题研究》1996年第2期，第5页 [Shi Ze, “On the Sino-Russian Relationship in the New Era” *Guoji Wenti Yanjiu* 1996 (2): 5.]

²¹¹ 《人民日报》1995年3月3日 [*People’s Daily*, March 3, 1995]. 见李静杰：《中俄战略协作伙伴关系及其美国因素》，第11页 [Li Jingjie, “China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations and the American Factor,” 11].

Premier Li Peng visited Moscow in June 1995, he complained that some countries still sought to instruct others on how to live and work, and that this situation must change. The trend toward multipolarity, which China and Russia both supported, would reduce the ability of powerful countries to interfere in the domestic affairs of other countries, Li said.²¹² As these statements indicate, Chinese leaders were especially concerned about the threat that U.S. power allegedly posed to their form of domestic governance. They sought to enlist Russia's support based on its similar concerns, an example of the way in which convergent national identities drew the two countries together at least as much as national interests defined in terms of the international balance of power.

In their bilateral relations, China and Russia increasingly followed this principle of non-interference in what the other side considered its own internal affairs. During his visit to China in March 1992, Kozyrev had criticized China's human rights record. By 1995, he no longer offered such criticisms. Instead, he praised China's domestic achievements.²¹³ By this time, Russia was embroiled in the war in Chechnya and appreciative of China's support for its policies toward the breakaway republic. Both countries were now inclined to view with understanding the other's efforts to preserve its domestic political stability and to defend its territorial integrity.²¹⁴ Russia had reaffirmed its support for the "one China" policy in 1992, and it adhered to this position during the crisis over Taiwan in March 1996. On March 12, as the crisis unfolded, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement reaffirming its view that Taiwan was part of China and calling

²¹² 杨闯, 高飞, 冯玉军著: 《百年中俄关系》, 第 328-329 页 [Yang Chuang, Gao Fei, Feng Yujun, eds., *One Hundred Years of China-Russia Relations*, 328-329].

²¹³ Бажанов. Российско-китайские отношения на современном этапе. С. 425 [Bazhanov, "The Contemporary Stage of Russia-China Relations," 425].

²¹⁴ Афанасьев, Логвинов. Россия и Китай: на пороге третьего тысячелетия. С. 59 [Afanasyev and Logvinov, "Russia and China: On the Threshold of the Third Millennium," 59].

for the peaceful resolution of the crisis.²¹⁵ Nevertheless, China understood that Russia, like the Soviet Union in the 1950s, was unlikely to offer military support in the event of armed conflict over Taiwan.²¹⁶

Against this background, Jiang Zemin warmly welcomed Yeltsin to China in April 1996. This visit allowed Yeltsin to signal to his domestic audience that he was rebalancing Russia's foreign policy and abandoning overdependence on the West. In this way, China's friendly reception for Yeltsin boosted his re-election prospects. This fact was notable, given that Yeltsin's main competitor, Zyuganov, was the candidate of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation.²¹⁷

During Yeltsin's visit, China and Russia upgraded their relationship to a "strategic partnership." This phrase reflected the strengthening of relations that China and Russia had achieved over the previous few years. The new formula was not, however, the product of careful diplomatic negotiations in advance of the summit meeting. Instead, Yeltsin himself suggested the new wording while on the airplane to China. Yeltsin read the draft declaration, which called for "developing long-term, stable, good-neighborly, friendly, mutually beneficial cooperation and constructive partnership relations, oriented toward the 21st century." The Russian president was unsatisfied with this wording because, in his opinion, it contained nothing new compared to previous declarations and therefore failed to offer guidance for the future development of the relationship. In his own hand, he revised the formula to "equal trusting partnership, directed at the

²¹⁵ Иванов А.В. Без политики. Отношения России с Тайванем, Гонконгом и Макао // Россия и Китай: четыре века взаимодействия—история, Современное состояние и перспективы развития российско-китайских отношений / Под ред. А.В. Лукина. М.: Весь мир, 2013. С. 513-609 [A.V. Ivanov, "Without Politics: Russia's Relations with Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao," in *Russia and China: Four Centuries of Interaction—History, Contemporary Conditions, and Prospects for the Development of Russia-China Relations*, ed. Alexander Lukin (Moscow: Ves' Mir, 2013), 513-609].

²¹⁶ Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, 139fn6.

²¹⁷ Rozman, *The Sino-Russian Challenge to the World Order*, 245.

strategic interaction of the two countries in the 21st century.” The most important addition was the phrase “strategic interaction.” Several Russian diplomats who accompanied Yeltsin, mindful of Chinese diplomacy’s emphasis on protocol, doubted that the Chinese side would accept such a last-minute change. During his meeting with Yeltsin, however, Jiang read the proposed wording and quickly agreed to it.²¹⁸

In the joint declaration announcing their strategic partnership, China and Russia agreed “in the future to strengthen cooperation in those spheres where their approaches are close or coincide, and to search for paths of interaction where their positions differ.”²¹⁹ The declaration also stated, regarding the international situation, that “the two sides believe that the world at present is in deep and complicated change. The trend of world multipolarization is developing.... Seeking peace, stability, cooperation, and development have already become the main currents of current international life. But the world is certainly not peaceful. Hegemonism, repeated exertion of pressure, and power politics still exist, bloc politics have new manifestations, and world peace and development still face severe challenges.”²²⁰ China and Russia once again insisted, however, that their strategic partnership was not an alliance and was not directed against any third party.

During Yeltsin’s visit to China, he and Jiang also met in Shanghai with the leaders of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan to sign an agreement on military confidence-building measures in the border regions. This “Shanghai five” grouping consisted of Russia, China, and the

²¹⁸ 周晓沛：《中苏中俄关系亲历记》北京：世界知识出版社，2010年，第100-101页 [Zhou Xiaopei, *A Record of Personal Experiences in China-Soviet and China-Russia Relations* (Beijing: Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 2010), 100-101]. Цит. по: Лукин. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 314 [Cited in Lukin, “From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 314].

²¹⁹ Сборник российско-китайских договоров. 1949-1999. С. 333, 335. [*Collection of Russia-China Treaties, 1949-1999*, 333, 335]. Цит. по: Лукин А.В. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 314 [Cited in Lukin, “From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 314].

²²⁰ 《中华人民共和国条约集》，第四十三集（1996）646-647页，世界知识出版社，1999。见杨闯，高飞，冯玉军著：《百年中俄关系》，第338页 [*Collection of Treaties of the People’s Republic of China Vol. 43* (1996), 646-647. Cited in Yang Chuang, Gao Fei, Feng Yujun, eds., *One Hundred Years of China-Russia Relations*, 338].

three newly independent, former Soviet Central Asian republics that shared a border with China. The group negotiated this agreement bilaterally, with China on one side and the four post-Soviet states on the other. The parties agreed, among other things, not to attack each other with military forces stationed in the border regions, not to carry out military exercises directed against the other side, to inform each other of important military activities within one hundred miles of the border, and to limit the scale, scope, and number of military exercises.²²¹ The following year, the Shanghai Five reached an agreement on reduction of military forces in the border regions. Together, these agreements continued the work that Gorbachev had begun in the 1980s and offered additional security reassurance to all of the countries involved. This group added Uzbekistan in 2001 and became the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

China's success in cultivating Russia by the mid-1990s served as evidence for many Chinese strategists that their pursuit of multipolarity was paying dividends. Japan's stagnation and resulting failure to exert regional leadership in Asia strengthened this conclusion.²²² According to power cycle theory, Japan reached a peak in relative power during the middle of the decade.²²³ After consolidating their own domestic rule, Chinese leaders conducted foreign policy in accordance with Deng's principles. They embraced a patient approach, avoiding provocative actions that would have made their country a target of other great powers and embracing globalization as a means of stimulating domestic economic growth and modernization. At the same time, they cultivated other powerful countries, including Russia, with the goal of limiting U.S. political influence. These efforts were only partially successful, as Russia continued to pursue

²²¹ 杨闯, 高飞, 冯玉军著: 《百年中俄关系》, 第 344 页 [Yang Chuang, Gao Fei, Feng Yujun, eds., *One Hundred Years of China-Russia Relations* (Beijing: Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 2006), 344].

²²² Rozman, *Chinese Strategic Thought Toward Asia*, 76.

²²³ Doran, "Economics, Philosophy of History, and the 'Single Dynamic' of Power Cycle Theory: Expectations, Competition, and Statecraft," 13-49.

close relations with the United States while U.S.-Japan ties strengthened. Nevertheless, by the middle of the decade, several trends, including a U.S. retreat from pressure on China over human rights, the stifling of Japan's regional ambitions, and Russia's increased receptiveness to close relations with China, convinced many Chinese strategists that they had generally followed the proper approach.²²⁴

Conclusion

By 1996, China and Russia had achieved considerable progress in their relationship. They had built upon the Sino-Soviet normalization of 1989, established overall friendly relations, and nearly resolved their longstanding border dispute, with only a few details still to be agreed. Economic ties remained weak, and some groups in Russia voiced concerns about Chinese immigration. However, the two countries pressed forward in improving relations. This rapprochement provided both countries with a secure strategic rear and assured no repetition of the damaging hostility of the Sino-Soviet split. Given these benefits, China and Russia would have faced strong incentives to improve relations even in the absence of difficulty in their relations with the United States.

The structure of the international system, now defined by the overwhelming concentration of power in the hands of the United States, also partially explains the evolution of China-Russia relations from 1991 to 1996. Both countries sought to improve relations with the other as a partial counterweight to U.S. power in a unipolar world. Events also pushed China and Russia closer together throughout this period, as tension in both countries' relations with the United States ran in parallel with their own improved bilateral relationship. The two countries increasingly expressed

²²⁴ Rozman, *Chinese Strategic Thought Toward Asia*, 70, 76, 83.

their common views on a range of international issues, particularly their discomfort with U.S. power and with what they viewed as undue exertions of U.S. strategic pressure. They also drew closer based on affinity between their national identities, affirming their mutual interest in resisting Western criticism of their domestic governance.

At the same time, both countries recognized that they could not match U.S. power through traditional balance of power politics. Moreover, both countries recognized throughout this period that their modernization and economic development depended on maintaining tolerable working relations with the West. Therefore, despite their rhetoric, they resisted the formation of a military alliance. Instead, they pursued more subtle goals, hoping to use their relationship to gain some bargaining leverage in relations with the West.

From the perspective of power cycle theory, the first half of the 1990s was a “normal period of history” in which neither China nor Russia was passing through a critical point on its power cycle, according to the definitions offered in Chapter 1. Indeed, this normal period of history lasted well into the new century, though Japan’s arrival at its peak in relative power in the mid-1990s was an important event. Consistent with power cycle theory’s expectations, international politics in the 1990s were quiescent. At the same time, despite the unipolar structure of the international system, changes in relative power continued to occur. Russia was struggling to regain its footing, while China was still in the early stages of a period of accelerating growth in relative power. Both countries viewed relative power in dynamic terms. They looked ahead to a future in which, they hoped, unipolarity would eventually give way to multipolarity. At times, they misperceived the trends. Russia’s early democratic leaders initially underestimated China’s prospects for the accumulation of power. China’s leaders during this period were overly optimistic about Russia’s revival while underestimating the resilience of U.S. power. As they waited for the emergence of

multipolarity, the leaders of China and Russia faced the continued reality of unipolarity and U.S. primacy.

Chapter 3

From Strategic Partnership to the Treaty of Good-Neighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation: 1996-2001

With the formation of a strategic partnership in April 1996, China and Russia continued to draw closer in their post-Cold War relations. The following year, China and Russia declared their common support for a new, multipolar international order, which they believed was already in formation. Improvement in both countries' relations with the United States, as well as divergences of views on some international issues, limited the two countries' cooperation at the international level during 1997 and 1998. Events in 1999, however, pushed China and Russia closer together and renewed their focus on resisting the United States. Two issues, namely the Kosovo War and U.S. plans to build national and theater missile defense systems, were especially prominent.

This confluence of events spurred China and Russia to strengthen their relations and to resist, at least rhetorically, what they called "power politics" and "hegemonism" by the United States. These efforts culminated in the signing, in July 2001, of the Treaty of Good-Neighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation. This treaty did not include a mutual defense clause and therefore did not signify the creation of a political-military alliance. However, China and Russia pledged not to join alliances directed against the other, not to allow third countries to use their territory to stage military actions against the other, and to consult each other if either country perceived a threat to its security. The treaty therefore laid the legal foundation for the bilateral relationship, served as a capstone to a decade of development in China-Russia relations, and established the basis for further improvement of relations.

Throughout this period, the structure of the international system remained unipolar, but events between 1999 and 2001 heightened concerns by China and Russia about the effects of

unipolarity. These concerns led them to increase cooperation. Once again, though Russia continued to sell arms to China, the two countries refrained from forming an alliance. Instead, they confined their cooperation to joint declarations and other rhetorical efforts, professing their confidence that an emerging multipolar order eventually would increase their room for maneuver. This rhetoric was meaningful, however, because it signaled a convergence of the two countries' national identities and their desire to create a more favorable normative environment for the pursuit of their national strategies.

During the period that this chapter covers, China was the more consistent of the two countries in seeking to expand cooperation. Boris Yeltsin became increasingly receptive to China's entreaties as tensions mounted in Russia's relations with the West, but Yeltsin never abandoned his desire to improve relations with the United States and its allies. After assuming the presidency at the end of 1999, Vladimir Putin maintained interest in relations with China, but he initially subordinated this relationship to the pursuit of more favorable diplomatic relations with the West.

Limits of the new strategic partnership (1996-1998)

Russia comes to terms with NATO expansion but falls into economic crisis

By the time of the 1996 Russian presidential election, Russia had adjusted its diplomacy. The appointment of Yevgeny Primakov as foreign minister in January of that year signaled that Russia would pursue a more balanced foreign policy, which would include closer relations with China. However, Yeltsin continued to place great importance on relations with the United States. This would remain true throughout his presidency, even as U.S.-Russia relations soured. In 1996 and 1997, facing the inevitability of NATO expansion, Yeltsin sought and achieved an agreement with the alliance that would at least partially accommodate Russia's interests. This diplomacy

ensured that U.S.-Russia relations remained relatively stable until 1998, when the Russian financial crisis created severe disillusionment on both sides.

The Clinton administration delayed its decisions about which new member-states to admit to NATO, and on what timetable, until after the July 1996 Russian presidential election. Once Yeltsin had been re-elected, members of the administration were ready to proceed. They had to wait a bit longer to reach a deal with Russia, however, because Yeltsin, who had suffered a heart attack between the two rounds of the election, was forced to withdraw from his daily duties as president until December 1996 because of health problems. When he returned, he instructed Primakov, his foreign minister, to cut a deal with the United States that would accept the inevitable alliance expansion but seek to protect Russia's interests.¹ In the meantime, Clinton officially announced in late October, just two weeks before his own re-election, that NATO would expand.²

Russia's two main demands were for reassurances that NATO would deploy neither troops nor nuclear weapons on the territory of new member-states. In order to make a NATO-Russia agreement possible, the alliance sought to address these Russian concerns. In December, during the NATO foreign ministers meeting in Brussels, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher declared that the alliance had "no intention, no plan, and no need to station nuclear weapons on the territory of any new members." Following this statement, Primakov announced that he was willing to work with NATO on a charter. In March 1997, the alliance addressed the issue of troop deployments. The alliance declined to offer a binding commitment not to deploy troops on the territory of new members, as Russia had sought, but it vowed to use other means besides such deployments to provide for its collective defense. During a summit meeting that month with

¹ James M. Goldgeier, *Not Whether But When: The U.S. Decision to Enlarge NATO* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1999), 110-111; James M. Goldgeier and Michael McFaul, *Power and Purpose: U.S. Policy Toward Russia After the Cold War* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), 247.

² Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 202.

President Bill Clinton, Yeltsin indicated that the terms of the emerging agreement would be acceptable.³

On May 27, 1997, NATO heads of state and Yeltsin signed the NATO-Russia Founding Act. This act established the Permanent Joint Council, which was to serve as a mechanism for consultation between Russia and alliance members, though it would not give Russia a veto over alliance decision making. By the time of the NATO summit in Madrid held that July, the alliance had decided to admit Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. Although Yeltsin continued to oppose the alliance's expansion, the NATO-Russia Founding Act was perhaps the best deal that he could have obtained, given Russia's weak position.⁴

The Clinton administration and other supporters argued that NATO expansion would prevent the formation of a strategic vacuum between Germany and Russia, eliminate the possibility of future Russian imperialism in this region, and thereby ensure European security.⁵ Supporters also argued that NATO expansion would promote democratic and market reform in Central and Eastern Europe. The policy also drew sharp criticism, however. Many opponents focused on the possible negative effects on Russian democracy, U.S.-Russia relations, and European security. In the view of many of these critics, NATO expansion was likely to encourage nationalistic, anti-Western, and militaristic policies in Russia, tendencies which might otherwise lose their appeal in a newly democratic Russia facing new possibilities.⁶

³ Goldgeier, *Not Whether But When*, 111-114.

⁴ Ibid, 114-121.

⁵ Ronald D. Asmus, Richard L. Kugler, and F. Stephen Larrabee, "Building a New NATO," *Foreign Affairs* 72 (Sept.-Oct. 1993): 28-40; Ronald D. Asmus, *Opening NATO'S Door: How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Zbigniew Brzezinski, "A Plan for Europe," *Foreign Affairs* 74 (January/February 1995): 26-42; Henry Kissinger, "Expand NATO Now," *Washington Post*, Dec. 19, 1994.

⁶ George F. Kennan, "A Fateful Error," *New York Times*, February 5, 1997; Michael Mandelbaum, *The Dawn of Peace in Europe* (New York: The Twentieth Century Fund Press, 1996), 45-65.

Some critiques also highlighted the possible stimulus that alliance expansion could give to China-Russia relations. Cold War historian John Lewis Gaddis, who noted that his fellow historians overwhelmingly opposed the alliance's expansion, disagreed with those who asserted that Russia had no choice but to accept it. "For Russia does indeed have a choice: it is in the interesting position of being able to lean one way or another in a strategic triangle that is likely to define the geopolitics of the early twenty-first century," Gaddis wrote. "It can continue to align itself, as it has patiently done so far, with the United States and Western Europe. Or it can do what the US itself did a quarter century ago under the guidance of Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger: it can tilt towards China."⁷ Kissinger himself, who supported NATO expansion, was more sanguine: "Only the unlikely prospect of relentless American bullying of both [China and Russia] could drive them to a deeper partnership."⁸

Assessing the impact of NATO expansion on China-Russia relations is not a straightforward exercise. In the short run, progress toward NATO expansion did coincide with the strengthening of China-Russia relations in the 1990s, as discussed in Chapter 2. This strategic convergence achieved some milestones, but it remained limited. NATO expansion did not push Russia into an alliance with China, which meant that the relationship did not constitute a power-aggregating arrangement of the kind predicted by balance of power theory. Moreover, for several years following the initial round of expansion, Russia maintained interest in improved relations with the West and harbored continued misgivings about the expansion of ties with China. In the two decades since, despite a considerable strengthening of the China-Russia relationship, this basic pattern held. As the end of the second decade of the twenty-first century approached, China and

⁷ John Lewis Gaddis, "History, Grand Strategy and NATO Enlargement," *Survival* 4 (1998): 146-147.

⁸ Henry Kissinger, *Does America Need a Foreign Policy? Toward a Diplomacy for the 21st Century* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 117.

Russia had grown closer together strategically, but they had not yet fulfilled Gaddis's warning. Russia had neither executed a full strategic reorientation toward China nor succeeded in playing the China card with anything like the success that Nixon and Kissinger enjoyed. For Russia, NATO expansion was troubling not because it posed a direct threat to Russian security, but because it was damaging to Russia's self-image as a great power and its quest for an enhanced foreign policy role. In this sense, it was one in a series of events that contributed to a gradual diplomatic convergence of China and Russia based on the overlap of their national identities, one component of which was their common self-image as aggrieved great powers.⁹ The partial recovery of Russian power that began during the first decade of the twenty-first century eventually enabled Russia to draw a line against further NATO expansion into former Soviet territories.

Whatever the long-run consequences of the alliance's expansion, the NATO-Russia Founding Act helped to sustain some momentum in U.S.-Russia relations during 1997 and part of 1998. In addition, the United States was pleased with apparent progress in Russia's economic reforms. At the outset of his new term in office, Yeltsin appointed reformers such as Anatoly Chubais and Boris Nemtsov to high positions in his government. Inflation came under control, the ruble was stable, and Russia recorded positive economic growth in 1997 for the first time in a decade.¹⁰ By the following year, however, Russia's government finances were in dire shape, and a major financial crisis loomed. On August 1, 1998, the Russian government devalued the ruble and defaulted on all outstanding debts to private holders of Russian bonds. The financial crisis resulted in a sharp economic contraction, soaring inflation, a stock market crash, and the collapse of the banking system. Under pressure from his domestic political opponents, Yeltsin named

⁹ Gilbert Rozman, *The Sino-Russian Challenge to the World Order: National Identities, Bilateral Relations, and East Versus West in the 2010s* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2014).

¹⁰ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 212-213.

Primakov as prime minister shortly after the default and devaluation, with strong support from the Communist Party. Russia's liberal reformers were out of power, and their policies seemed discredited.¹¹ Although the devaluation of the ruble laid the groundwork for Russia's economic recovery during the following years, the crash of August 1998 caused bitterness on both sides of the U.S.-Russia relationship. On the U.S. side, many policymakers who had maintained optimism about Russia's future became pessimistic for the first time.¹²

The generally positive trends in U.S.-Russia relations during 1997 and the first half of 1998 coincided with a period of improvement in U.S.-China relations. The simultaneous improvement of these two bilateral relationships limited, to some extent, the scope of China-Russia interactions at the global level during this period.

China adjusts its strategy and improves relations with the United States

In the early years following the collapse of the Soviet Union, China responded to the new unipolar structure of the international system by continuing its military modernization program, which had begun in the late 1980s, and by strengthening relations with Russia to provide at least a modest counterweight to U.S. power. During this period, China also adopted an assertive posture toward Taiwan and its South China Sea disputes. By 1996, however, China had begun to adjust its strategy.¹³ China's growing power had given rise to a "China threat theory," which Chinese leaders had proven unable to dispel merely by asserting their good intentions. Chinese leaders grew concerned about negative reactions, among neighboring states in the Asia-Pacific region, to

¹¹ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 232-233.

¹² *Ibid.*, 241-243.

¹³ Avery Goldstein, "Structural Realism and China's Foreign Policy: Much (But Never All) of the Story," in *Perspectives on Structural Realism*, ed. Andrew K. Hanami, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 12.

China's assertive behavior. As a result, they adopted a strategy that sought to foster an amicable external environment that would allow them to focus on China's internal development and the accumulation of what they called "comprehensive national power." The strategy's ultimate goal was to enable China's rise to power without provoking a counterbalancing coalition, which was most likely to arise under U.S. leadership and to include several states in the Asia-Pacific region.¹⁴ In essence, China sought to buy time for its rise. China pursued this strategy consistently until the 2008 financial crisis, with some exceptions, including a hardening at times of policy toward Japan.

According to a similar analysis based on a review of China's long history, China by the end of the twentieth century had adopted a "calculative" security strategy focused on the need for domestic stability and economic growth, a peaceful international environment, and military modernization paired with restraint in the use of force. This strategy was based on the recognition that China required geopolitical peace and stability in order to pursue its top priority, namely uninterrupted domestic economic growth and modernization, which was essential both to ensure internal stability and to guarantee China's security.¹⁵

The adjustments that Deng Xiaoping made to Chinese foreign policy beginning in the early 1980s laid the groundwork for this strategy. Starting in 1982, Deng abandoned the alliance strategy that China had followed during the preceding decades, replacing it with an independent foreign policy featuring equidistance from the two superpowers. As discussed in the previous chapter, Deng believed by the mid-1980s that the threat of major war was receding, presenting China with the opportunity to focus on domestic modernization and economic growth. This trend offered

¹⁴ Avery Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge: China's Grand Strategy and International Security* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 12; 姜毅: 《新世纪的中俄关系》 北京, 世界知识出版社, 2007 年, 第 10 页 [Jiang Yi, *China-Russian Relations in the New Century* (Beijing: Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 2007), 10].

¹⁵ Michael D. Swaine and Ashley J. Tellis, *Interpreting China's Grand Strategy: Past, Present, and Future* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2000), 97-98.

China the prospect of a favorable international environment conducive to the pursuit of China's "four modernizations." Moreover, bipolarity was yielding to a new era of multipolarity in which China would have greater room for maneuver among great powers.¹⁶

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, however, circumstances changed. Deng's strategy had been based on the need to balance both the United States and the Soviet Union, but the Soviet collapse and Russia's weakness during the 1990s weakened the forces with the potential capability to resist the United States. Deng had formulated his strategy during a period of close relations with the United States, but U.S.-China relations in the post-Cold War era experienced both continued cooperation and areas of increased friction. Deng's strategy had stressed non-alliance and non-confrontation, but China now perceived a threat to this strategy in the strengthening of the U.S.-Japan security alliance, as well as in NATO's eastward expansion.¹⁷ The United States, in the words of one Chinese analyst, was now approaching China from both east and west and "shooting with both hands."¹⁸

Partly in response to these policies, China strengthened relations with Russia. Together, these developments helped to clarify great-power strategic relations, especially the U.S.-Europe, U.S.-Japan, and China-Russia alignments. The structure of the international system continued to be defined by "one superpower, many great powers," and the risk of major war remained low, as during the early 1990s. The strengthening of pro-independence forces in Taiwan, however, meant that the risk of China's being drawn into a regional war increased as the 1990s progressed.¹⁹

¹⁶ Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, 25.

¹⁷ 叶自成:《中国实行大国外交战略势在必行——关于中国外交战略的几点思考》,《世界经济与政治》,2000年第1期,第5页[Ye Zicheng, "The Imperative for China to Carry Out a Great Power Diplomatic Strategy—A Few Reflections on China's Diplomatic Strategy," *Shijie Jingji Yu Zhengzhi* 2000 (1): 5].

¹⁸ 黄宗良:《面对北约新战略,重估中俄关系》,《环球经纬》1999年第5期,第61页[Huang Zongliang, "Facing NATO's new strategy, reevaluate China-Russia relations," *Huanqiu Jingwei* 1999 (5): 61].

¹⁹ 阎学通:《对中国安全环境的分析与思考》,《世界经济与政治》,2000年第2期[Yan Xuetong, "Analysis and Consideration of China's Security Environment," *Shijie Jingji Yu Zhengzhi* 2000 (2): 6, 6fn5, 7].

China's perception by 1996 that its security situation had deteriorated pushed the country toward improved relations with Russia. Chinese leaders, however, mostly perceived a threat to their domestic governance, rather than a direct threat to their country's physical security. In this way, their national identity converged with that of Russia. China's concerns about Taiwan, for example, ran in parallel with Russia's desire to maintain control over Chechnya and its sensitivity over foreign criticism of its military campaign in the breakaway republic. This combination of strategic and national identity concerns facilitated the strategic partnership that the two countries proclaimed in April of that year.

China's own growing capabilities and increasingly assertive policies in the preceding period, however, had also caused unease among its neighbors. China's assertive claims in the South China Sea, which were especially apparent during the Mischief Reef incident in 1995, and its policies toward Taiwan during the 1995-1996 crisis had stimulated other countries in the Asia-Pacific region to strengthen their security cooperation with the United States. The strengthening of U.S. alliances with Japan and Australia were of special concern to China, especially the former. In addition, several countries in Southeast Asia also bolstered defense ties with the United States.²⁰ China, whose actions to enhance its own security had increased perceptions of insecurity among its neighbors, was thus caught in a form of the security dilemma.²¹ Deng may not have faced anything like Bismarck's "nightmare of coalitions," but his successors encountered a security environment in the Asia-Pacific region in which the conditions for balance-of-power politics and alliance formation directed against China were increasingly present.²²

²⁰ Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, 103-105, 110.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 48.

²² Тренин Д.В. Китайская проблема России // М.: Московский Центр Карнеги, 1998 г. С. 18 [Dmitri Trenin, *Russia's China Problem* (Moscow: Moscow Carnegie Center, 1998), 28].

In response to this predicament, China adopted a new grand strategy starting in 1996. Under this strategy, China sought to develop partnerships with the major actors in world politics and to reassure its neighbors by participating more actively in regional multilateral institutions.²³ China pursued these goals consistently for more than a decade afterward.²⁴ Foreign Minister Qian Qichen articulated this strategy in early 1997, when he introduced China's "new security concept."²⁵

Two Chinese analysts argued that China's regional strategy flowed naturally from its grand strategy, the overarching purpose of which was to foster an amicable international environment that would allow the country to focus on domestic modernization and economic growth.²⁶ Through the construction of partnerships, China sought to maintain good relations with all of the world's great powers. This great-power diplomacy remained largely "U.S.-centric," however, given the importance of U.S. economic, financial, and technological resources for China's modernization. China also sought to improve relations with neighboring countries in order to prevent the formation of a counterbalancing coalition, which an aggressive strategy would have been likely to stimulate, and thereby improve its regional security environment. To this end, China adopted a more positive attitude toward regional multilateral mechanisms.²⁷ Zhang Yunling, a government scholar who is

²³ Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, 12, 48, 118.

²⁴ Thomas J. Christensen, *The China Challenge: Shaping the Choices of a Rising Power* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2015), 193.

²⁵ David Shambaugh, *Modernizing China's Military: Progress, Problems, and Prospects* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 292-293; David M. Lampton, "China's Rise in Asia and America," in David Shambaugh, ed., *Power Shift: China and Asia's New Dynamics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 314.

²⁶ Tang Shiping and Zhang Yunling, "China's Regional Strategy," in *Power Shift: China and Asia's New Dynamics* ed. David Shambaugh (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); 唐世平, 张蕴岭: 《中国的地区战略》, 《世界经济与政治》, 2004年第6期, 第8页 [Tang Shiping, Zhang Yunling, "China's Regional Strategy," *Shijie Jingji Yu Zhengzhi* 2004 (6): 8; 唐世平: "理解中国的安全战略"《国际政治研究》, 2002年第3期, 第128-135页 [Tang Shiping, "Understanding China's Security Strategy," *Guoji Zhengzhi Yanjiu* 2002 (3): 128-135].

²⁷ 唐世平, 张蕴岭: 《中国的地区战略》, 第8页 [Tang Shiping, Zhang Yunling, "China's Regional Strategy," 8].

often credited with devising the strategy of reassurance toward ASEAN countries, wrote that the strategy sought to counter the “China threat theory” and forestall the formation of U.S.-led alliances that would encircle China.²⁸

The combination of deterrence of and reassurance toward China in U.S. foreign policy during the second half of the 1990s, therefore, yielded a more cooperative approach in China’s foreign policy. For example, while strengthening Asian alliances and continuing to support Taiwan, the United States also reiterated its commitment to the one-China policy.²⁹ Facing the prospect of a U.S.-led balancing coalition in Asia, China had no potential partners in a great-power alliance that could successfully balance U.S. power. Russia, which was still mired in its post-Soviet transformation and economic weakness, was too weak to serve as an effective ally.³⁰ China-Russia economic ties remained weak, and both countries feared that an alliance could jeopardize their integration into the global economy.³¹ Under these circumstances, China built a strategic partnership with Russia in order to purchase weapons for its military modernization, cultivate a partner with shared concerns about U.S. primacy, and avoid international isolation. China continued, however, to recognize the importance of ties with the United States.

Following the U.S.-China confrontation over Taiwan that began in 1995 and culminated in the March 1996 crisis in the Taiwan Strait, the United States and China sought to improve relations. The crisis showed both countries that disputes in bilateral relations, including those related to

²⁸ 张蕴岭：《综合安全观及对我国安全的思考》，《当代亚太》，2000年第1期 [Zhang Yunling, “A Comprehensive Security Concept and Reflections on My Country’s Security,” *Dangdai Yatai* 2000 (1)]. See Christensen, *The China Challenge*, 194.

²⁹ Christensen, *The China Challenge*, 195.

³⁰ 叶自成：《中国实行大国外交战略势在必行——关于中国外交战略的几点思考》，7页 [Ye Zicheng, “The Imperative for China to Carry Out a Great Power Diplomatic Strategy—A Few Reflections on China’s Diplomatic Strategy,” 7].

³¹ 叶自成：《在新形势下对邓小平外交思想的继承，发展和思考》，《世界经济与政治》，2004年第11期，第8-14页 [Ye Zicheng, “Carrying on, Developing, and Reflecting upon Deng Xiaoping’s Diplomatic Thought under New Circumstances,” *Shijie Jingji Yu Zhengzhi* 2004: (11), 8-14. Cited in Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, 116].

Taiwan, could escalate dangerously in the absence of careful management and close communication between the two governments. In May 1996, Secretary of State Warren Christopher delivered a speech calling for the United States and China to resolve their differences through engagement, not confrontation. In November 1996, shortly after Clinton won re-election, he met with Chinese President Jiang Zemin at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Manila. The two presidents agreed to hold bilateral summit meetings in the United States in 1997 and in China in 1998. These would be the first visits by the two countries' leaders to the other country since the Tiananmen Square crackdown.

Indeed, Jiang's visit to Washington in October 1997 was the first visit by a Chinese head of state to the United States since 1985. During this summit meeting, Clinton and Jiang issued a joint statement committing both countries "to build toward a constructive strategic partnership" in the twenty-first century.³² Thus, a year and a half after forming a strategic partnership with Russia, China agreed to describe its relationship with the United States in similar terms. During Clinton's visit to China in June 1998, he publicly reiterated U.S. support for the one-China policy, notably U.S. support for the "three no's": no independence for Taiwan, or two Chinas, or one Taiwan-one China. Although Clinton merely restated U.S. policy that had been in effect since the Nixon administration, China attached great importance to this statement following the recent Taiwan Strait crisis.³³ Throughout this period, the United States praised China for its constructive reaction to the Asian financial crisis that began in the fall of 1997, especially China's decision to refrain from devaluing its currency.³⁴

³² Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams*, 54-55.

³³ Ibid, 207-208.

³⁴ Ibid, 196; Christensen, *The China Challenge*, 193-194.

The result of these trends was therefore somewhat paradoxical. NATO's eastward expansion and the strengthening of the U.S.-Japan security alliance provided an impetus for strengthened China-Russia relations, which resulted in the strategic partnership that they announced by 1996. At the same time, Chinese leaders' concerns about encirclement by a U.S.-led alliance network in Asia led them to adopt a more reassuring strategy toward their neighbors and to seek improved relations with the United States. China sought to cultivate relations with Russia as a partial counterweight to U.S. power, but China's outreach toward Russia also fit neatly into its foreign policy strategy of improving relations with all great powers and neighboring countries. Russia held a special place in this process, however, because China's national identity converged with Russia's to a greater extent than was true in most of China's other bilateral relationships. Although China and Russia would issue a joint declaration in 1997 calling for the formation of a multipolar world, their cooperation at the international level was relatively constrained between 1996 and 1998. Instead, their focus was on consolidating the security benefits, especially in the border regions, of their improved bilateral relationship.

Halting progress in China-Russia relations

During the three years following the establishment of the China-Russia strategic partnership in April 1996, their cooperation at the international level made modest progress. The highlight was their joint declaration, issued during Chinese President Jiang Zemin's visit to Moscow in April 1997, calling for the establishment of a multipolar world. The two countries continued to focus primarily on bilateral issues, aiming to reap the benefits of their improved bilateral relationship.

Along with the three Central Asian members of the “Shanghai Five,” China and Russia built upon the previous year’s agreement on confidence-building measures in the border regions by reaching an additional agreement in April 1997 on mutual reductions of military forces in these same regions. This agreement stipulated that the five countries would reduce their military forces within 100 kilometers of the border to the lowest possible levels, that their deployments in these regions would consist of defensive weapons, that they would not use or threaten force against each other, that they would not seek unilateral military advantage, and that they would share information about military deployments in the border regions.³⁵ Together with the 1996 agreement on confidence-building measures, this treaty established mechanisms to promote the two countries’ border security and stability, eliminated the military standoff in the border region that had arisen during the Sino-Soviet split, and laid a cornerstone of political trust that was essential for China-Russia strategic cooperation at the international level.³⁶

During his visit to Moscow, Jiang Zemin delivered a speech to the Russian Duma in which he explained how relations with Russia fit into China’s overall foreign policy strategy of maintaining good relations with neighboring countries in order to create a favorable environment for continued domestic reforms.³⁷ China’s cultivation of relations with the Central Asian countries, a major aim of which was to promote stability in the countries bordering China’s restless

³⁵ 杨闯，高飞，冯玉军著：《百年中俄关系》，北京：世界知识出版社，2006年版，第346页 [Yang Chuang, Gao Fei, Feng Yujun, eds., *One Hundred Years of China-Russia Relations* (Beijing: Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 2006), 346].

³⁶ 吴大辉：《中俄战略协作伙伴关系：十年实践的历史考察》，《俄罗斯中亚东欧研究》2006年第3期，第2页 [Wu Dahui, “China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations: Historical Observations on Ten Years of Practice,” *Eluosi Zhongya Dongou Yanjiu* 2006 (3): 2]; Тренин Д.В. Китайская проблема России. С. 22 [Trenin, *Russia’s China Problem*, 22].

³⁷ 江泽民：《为建立公正合理的国际新秩序而共同努力——在俄罗斯联邦国家杜马的演讲》，1997年4月23日 [Jiang Zemin, “Exerting Common Efforts to Establish a Just and Rational New World Order,” Speech at the Duma of the Russian Federation, April 23, 1997]; 吴大辉：《中俄战略协作伙伴关系：十年实践的历史考察》，第2页 [Wu Dahui, “China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations: Historical Observations on Ten Years of Practice,” 2].

northwestern region of Xinjiang, also fit this strategy.³⁸ The 1996 agreement on confidence-building measures and the 1997 agreement on military reductions in the border region helped to consolidate the security benefits of improved China-Russia relations. The strengthening of China-Russia relations in the post-Cold War era, while intended largely to resist U.S. primacy in the international system, was therefore also an integral part of the strategy of reassurance toward neighboring countries that China embraced beginning in 1996.³⁹

China-Russia cooperation at the international level sustained some momentum in the years following the establishment of the strategic partnership in April 1996. During Jiang Zemin's visit to Moscow in April 1997, China and Russia issued what would become the first of several joint declarations on world multipolarity.⁴⁰ In the 1997 declaration, the two countries pledged that they would "strive to promote world multipolarity and the establishment of a new international order."⁴¹ This document expressed the two countries' mutual concerns about several trends in the 1990s, including what they perceived as the growing U.S. advantage in relative power, increasingly open attempts by the United States to consolidate unipolarity and practice "hegemonism," the weakening of the UN Security Council, and the attempt to marginalize the

³⁸ 唐世平：《中俄战略伙伴关系下的中亚经济一体化》，《当代亚太》，2000年第7期，第27-33页 [Tang Shiping, "Central Asian economic integration under China-Russia strategic partnership relations," *Dangdai Yatai* 2000 (7): 27-33].

³⁹ 顾关福：《中俄战略协作关系的新发展》，《和平与发展》1999年第1期，第44页 [Gu Guanfu, "The new development of China-Russia strategic cooperative relations," *Heping Yu Fazhan* 1999 (1): 44].

⁴⁰ 冯玉军：《对中俄战略协作伙伴关系的再思考》，《现代国际关系》1998年第8期，第2页 [Feng Yujun, "Rethinking China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations," *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* 1998 (8): 2]; 杨闯，高飞，冯玉军著：《百年中俄关系》，第359-360页 [Yang Chuang, Gao Fei, Feng Yujun, eds., *One Hundred Years of China-Russia Relations*, 359-360]; Лукин А.В. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. Россия и Китай после распада СССР // Россия и Китай: четыре века взаимодействия—история, Современное состояние и перспективы развития российско-китайских отношений / Под ред. А.В. Лукина. М.: Весь мир, 2013. С. 315-316 [Alexander Lukin, "From Normalization to Strategic Partnership. Russia and China After the Collapse of the USSR," in *Russia and China: Four Centuries of Interaction—History, Contemporary Conditions, and Prospects for the Development of Russia-China Relations*, ed. A.V. Lukin (Moscow: Ves' Mir, 2013), 315-316].

⁴¹ Russian-Chinese Joint Declaration on a Multipolar World and the Establishment of a New International Order, adopted in Moscow on 23 April 1997, <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/docs/52/plenary/a52-153.htm>

influence of Security Council members that were not members of U.S.-led alliances in decision-making on important international issues. Above all, China and Russia expressed concern about what they perceived as U.S. efforts to undermine the international order established at the end of World War II. China and Russia insisted that their relations were not directed against any third country, though their opposition to the “politics of pressure and diktat” was a clear criticism of recent U.S. foreign policy.⁴²

The document did not impose any formal obligations on the two countries, nor did it signify the formation of an alliance. Positive trends in both countries’ bilateral relations with the United States during this period, including reciprocal state visits by the U.S. and Chinese leaders and the signing of the NATO-Russia Founding Act, made clear that both countries continued to value their relations with the United States. The cooperation that this document expressed was, like many other aspects of China-Russia relations in the years since the Soviet collapse, largely rhetorical. Nevertheless, the joint declaration expressed the two countries’ long-term aspirations for the evolution of the international order.⁴³ It signaled their common desire not merely to wait passively for the advent of multipolarity, but to exert efforts to bring it into being.⁴⁴

During the second half of the 1990s, China and Russia also reiterated their support for each other’s territorial integrity. In 1998, Russia issued its “four no” promises on the Taiwan issue, agreeing that it did not support any form of Taiwan independence, that it did not accept the “two Chinas” or “one China one Taiwan” position, that it opposed Taiwan’s entry into the United

⁴² Карасин Г.Б. Россия и Китай на пороге тысячелетия // Международная Жизнь. 1997 г. — № 6. — С. 13, 17 [G.B. Karasin, “Russia and China on the Threshold of the Millennium,” *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn*’ 1997 (6): 13, 17].

⁴³ Лукин. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 315-316 [Lukin, “From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 315-316].

⁴⁴ Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, 24; 叶自成: 《中国实行大国外交战略势在必行—关于中国外交战略的几点思考》, 第 6-9 页 [Ye Zicheng, “The Imperative for China to Carry Out a Great Power Diplomatic Strategy—A Few Reflections on China’s Diplomatic Strategy,” 6-9].

Nations or any other international organization in which membership was limited to sovereign states, and that it would not sell weapons to Taiwan. In July 2000, Russia added a fifth “no,” agreeing with China’s opposition to interference by external forces in the Taiwan issue.⁴⁵ Later, when Yeltsin visited Beijing in December 1999, he received firm support from China for Russia’s conduct of the second war in Chechnya. Yeltsin thus avoided international isolation at a time when the United States and other Western countries had intensified their criticism of Russia’s policies in this war.⁴⁶

Despite their common views on many international issues and the shared aspirations that they expressed in the joint declaration on multipolarity, diverging interests on several issues during 1997 and 1998 limited the scope of the China-Russia strategic partnership.⁴⁷ During this period, the improvement of China-Russia relations encouraged Japan to seek improved relations with Russia.⁴⁸ Russia, in turn, was far more willing than China to accept the U.S.-Japan security alliance, including the upgrading of this alliance in 1996.⁴⁹ During a visit to Tokyo in May 1997, Russian Minister of Defense Igor Rodionov was quoted in news reports as saying that Russia welcomed the strengthening of defense ties between the United States and Japan, much to China’s displeasure.⁵⁰ A few months earlier, in December 1996, Rodionov had named China as one of

⁴⁵ 吴大辉：《中俄战略协作伙伴关系：十年实践的历史考察》，第4页 [Wu Dahui, “China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations: Historical Observations on Ten Years of Practice,” 4].

⁴⁶ Ларин А.Г. Американский фактор в российско-китайском стратегическом партнерстве // Проблемы Дальнего Востока. 2000 г. — № 6. — С. 22 [Alexander Larin, “The American Factor in the Russia-China Strategic Partnership,” *Problemy Dal’nego Vostoka* 2000 (6): 22].

⁴⁷ Gilbert Rozman, “Sino-Russian Relations: Mutual Assessments and Predictions,” in *Rapprochement or Rivalry? Russia-China Relations in a Changing Asia*, ed. Sherman W. Garnett (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2000), 167.

⁴⁸ Dmitri Trenin, “The China Factor: Challenge and Chance for Russia,” in *Rapprochement or Rivalry? Russia-China Relations in a Changing Asia*, ed. Sherman W. Garnett (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2000), 52.

⁴⁹ Rozman, “Sino-Russian Relations: Mutual Assessments and Predictions,” 156.

⁵⁰ *Сегодня*. 19 мая 1997 г. [Sevodnya, May 19, 1997]; *Asahi Shimbun*, May 17, 1997; *China Daily*, May 19, 1997. Cited in Harry Gelman, “The Changing Asian Arena,” in *Rapprochement or Rivalry? Russia-China Relations in a Changing Asia*, ed. Sherman W. Garnett (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2000), 423-424, 431n39. See also *Moscow Times*, May 20, 1997; *Asia Times*, May 21, 1997. Cited in Sherman W. Garnett,

Russia's potential enemies.⁵¹ Rodionov's statements were outliers among top Russian officials. Nevertheless, Russia's view of U.S. alliances in Asia reflected its recognition that these alliances helped to preserve the status quo in Asia and therefore to arrest the further decline of Russia's power in this region.⁵² In the view of some Russian analysts, China at times paid insufficient attention to Russia's interests in Northeast and East Asia, giving priority instead to relations with the United States, Japan, and the two Koreas.⁵³ In addition, the nuclear crisis on the Indian subcontinent in May 1998 left China and Russia on opposite sides. Although both countries condemned that month's nuclear tests by India and Pakistan, Russia maintained close historical ties with the former and China with the latter.⁵⁴

Another incident during this period that demonstrated the limits of China-Russia cooperation at the global level was Primakov's abortive proposal for a Russia-China-India bloc to resist the United States. Primakov, whose appointment as foreign minister in January 1996 had signaled a more balanced Russian foreign policy, continued this approach after becoming prime minister in August 1998. In December 1998, the United States launched a bombing campaign against Iraq amid a showdown over that country's nuclear program. During an official visit to India later that month, Primakov proposed the formation of a Russia-China-India strategic triangle. China renounced the idea the very next day, and India also opposed it.⁵⁵ Yeltsin quickly disavowed

"Introduction: Limited Partnership," in *Rapprochement or Rivalry? Russia-China Relations in a Changing Asia*, ed. Sherman W. Garnett (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2000), 29.

⁵¹ Тренин. Китайская проблема России. С. 34 [Trenin, *Russia's China Problem*, 34].

⁵² Andrew Kuchins, "Russian Perspectives on China: Strategic Ambivalence," in *The Future of China-Russia Relations*, ed. James Bellacqua (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2010), 40.

⁵³ Титаренко М.Л. Геополитическое значение Дальнего Востока. Россия, Китай и другие страны Азии. Москва. Памятники исторической мысли. 2008. С. 36 [M.L. Titarenko, *The Geopolitical Meaning of the Far East: Russia, China, and Other Countries of Asia* (Moscow: Pamyatniki Istoricheskoi Mysli, 2008), 36].

⁵⁴ Rozman, "Sino-Russian Relations: Mutual Assessments and Predictions," 156.

⁵⁵ Бажанов. Российско-китайские отношения на современном этапе. С. 421 [Bazhanov, "The Contemporary Stage of Russia-China Relations," 421]; Лукин. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 368 [Lukin, "From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 368].

the proposal as well.⁵⁶ Primakov later wrote that he had primarily envisioned close contacts among the three, mostly on a bilateral level, rather than an alliance.⁵⁷ Had Primakov's proposal been implemented, it would have signaled heightened efforts to resist U.S. primacy in the international system. Its rejection clarified that neither the Chinese leadership nor Yeltsin, let alone India, were prepared to engage in anything that suggested the formation of an anti-Western bloc. Despite the preponderance of U.S. power that existed during this period, none of these countries felt sufficiently threatened by the United States to attempt such a geopolitical alignment. A Russia-China-India bloc would have been difficult to manage diplomatically in any case, given differences in the three countries' national interests and the potential for great-power rivalry between China and India.

These events demonstrated the limitations of China-Russia cooperation at the international level in 1997 and 1998. In addition, the Russian economic crash in August 1998 dramatically revealed Russia's weakness and limitations as an international partner for China.⁵⁸ Russia was acutely conscious of its own weak position. In part, its pursuit of good relations with China reflected its recognition that it lacked the capability, in any case, to oppose China for at least the next fifteen years.⁵⁹ From the perspective of power cycle theory, Russia was still several years away from reaching the lower turning point on a new cycle and entering a period of accelerating growth.⁶⁰ During this period, therefore, several factors served to restrict the international

⁵⁶ Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, 136-137fn2.

⁵⁷ Примаков Е. Мысли вслух. Москва: Российская Газета. 2011. С. 159 [Yevgeny Primakov, "Thoughts out loud," (Moscow: Rossisskaya Gazeta, 2011), 159]; Бажанов. Российско-китайские отношения на современном этапе. С. 421 [Bazhanov, "The Contemporary Stage of Russia-China Relations," 421].

⁵⁸ William C. Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," *International Security* 24, no. 1 (1999): 36.

⁵⁹ Тренин. Китайская проблема России. С. 26 [Trenin, *Russia's China Problem*, 26]; 顾关福: 《中俄战略协作关系的新发展》, 第 43 页 [Gu Guanfu, "The New Development of China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Relations," 43].

⁶⁰ Charles F. Doran, "Imperatives of European Security at Russia's Critical Point on its Power Cycle," *Stosunki Międzynarodowe – International Relations* 51, no. 2 (2015): 93-105.

dimension of the China-Russia strategic partnership. These factors included the improvement in U.S.-China relations resulting from China's embrace of a more reassuring foreign policy strategy, the stabilization of U.S.-Russia relations following the deal on NATO expansion, both countries' continued need for economic interchange with the West, the diverging interests of China and Russia on some international issues, and the inability of a China-Russia partnership to counter the United States effectively. Beginning in 1999, however, the flow of events led China and Russia to increase their focus on international cooperation.

Increased Cooperation at the International Level (1999-2001)

Starting in 1999, a series of developments pushed China and Russia closer together strategically. Foremost among these were the Kosovo War and the U.S. pursuit of missile defense systems. Chinese and Russian experts agree that 1999 was an important turning point in the development of their countries' strategic partnership.⁶¹ A period of increased strategic cooperation between China and Russia culminated two years later in their signing of the Treaty of Good-Neighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation. Although this treaty did not signify the creation of an alliance, it did reflect the two countries' growing strategic convergence.

⁶¹ 吴大辉：《中俄战略协作伙伴关系：十年实践的历史考察》，第3页 [Wu Dahui, "China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations: Historical Observations on Ten Years of Practice," 3]; 李静杰：《中俄战略协作伙伴关系及其美国因素》，《东欧中亚研究》，2000年第3期，第11-12页 [Li Jingjie, "China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations and the American Factor," *Dongou Zhongya Yanjiu* 2000 (3): 11-12]; Лукин. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 329 [Lukin, "From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 329]; Ларин. Американский фактор в российско-китайском стратегическом партнерстве. С. 21 [Alexander Larin, "The American Factor in the Russia-China Strategic Partnership," 21].

The Kosovo War

The NATO bombing campaign against Yugoslavia that began in March 1999 aroused strong opposition in both Russia and China. The United States, seeking to avoid a repeat of its delayed response to the slaughter in Bosnia earlier in the decade, initiated the bombing campaign against the Serb-dominated Federal Republic of Yugoslavia with the goal of halting atrocities against the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, an autonomous region within Serbia. Unlike Bosnia, which was a sovereign state at the time of the NATO intervention there, Kosovo was a constituent element of Yugoslavia. Russia and China therefore objected to the NATO bombing campaign as an unlawful intervention in the domestic affairs of a sovereign state, rejecting the alliance's argument that the intervention was justified on humanitarian grounds.

Both countries feared the precedent that NATO's actions could set for their own restive regions. For Russia, this concern centered on Chechnya. China was concerned about Tibet and Xinjiang, over which it exercised sovereign control, as well as Taiwan, which enjoyed *de facto* independence but which China considered to be part of its own territory. Moreover, Russia and China both objected to NATO's decision to initiate military action against Yugoslavia without UN Security Council authorization, which both countries could have blocked with their veto authority. In addition to these concerns, Russia's longstanding historical, ethnic, and religious ties to the Orthodox Serbs aroused passions among the Russian people. The bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade in May, in turn, provoked an intense nationalistic response among the Chinese people. For all of these reasons, the Kosovo War was a challenge to the national identities of both Russia and China and therefore served to strengthen their relationship.⁶²

⁶² Rozman, *The Sino-Russian Challenge to the World Order*, 274.

At the time of the NATO-Russia Founding Act in May 1997, the alliance heads of state had tried to convince Yeltsin that NATO would henceforth be more of a political than a military alliance. Now, less than two years later, NATO was going to war for the first time in its history, conducting military operations outside of its own territory. Moreover, the bombing campaign began just two weeks after Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary joined the alliance. When bombing commenced on March 24, 1999, the action drew condemnations across the Russian political spectrum.⁶³ The Russian public was united in its opposition to the NATO bombing campaign.⁶⁴ Polls taken in April showed that 90 percent of Russians opposed NATO's actions. Primakov, who was on an airplane to Washington when he learned that the bombing campaign had begun, famously ordered the plane to turn around. As a result of this crisis, U.S.-Russia relations fell to their lowest level since the end of the Cold War.⁶⁵

U.S.-Russia interactions over Kosovo differed sharply from those in Bosnia, where Russia had agreed to dispatch its own forces to serve as peacekeepers under U.S. command at the end of hostilities. The NATO Permanent Joint Council, which had been established to promote cooperation between the alliance and Russia during crises such as the one in Kosovo, failed to ease the tension.⁶⁶ After the bombing began, Russia broke off relations with NATO.⁶⁷ Early in the bombing campaign, some U.S. policymakers hoped that Slobodan Milosevic, the president of Yugoslavia, would surrender quickly, thus minimizing the damage to U.S.-Russia relations.⁶⁸ Initially, given the rupture in diplomatic exchanges between the United States and Russia, it

⁶³ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 247.

⁶⁴ William Zimmerman, *The Russian People and Foreign Policy: Russian Elite and Mass Perspectives, 1993-2000* (Princeton University Press, 2002), chap. 6.

⁶⁵ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 253; Angela E. Stent, *The Limits of Partnership: U.S.-Russian Relations in the Twenty-First Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 44.

⁶⁶ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 248.

⁶⁷ Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 44.

⁶⁸ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 251.

appeared that efforts to repair the relationship would have to wait until after the bombing campaign had ended. As weeks passed and the bombing campaign continued without a surrender, however, Yeltsin engaged diplomatically with the United States in an effort to end the bombing and to ensure that Russia would be involved in the resolution of the conflict. Around the time of NATO's fiftieth anniversary celebration in Washington in late April, Yeltsin offered to assign Viktor Chernomyrdin to work with U.S. and other international officials to seek an end to the conflict. While serving as prime minister earlier in the decade, he and U.S. Vice President Al Gore had co-chaired a commission that addressed issues in the bilateral relationship. The United States readily accepted this offer.⁶⁹

On May 7, shortly after these diplomatic efforts got underway, a U.S. B-2 stealth bomber dropped precision-guided munitions on the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade. The embassy had been identified incorrectly as a Serb military target. The bombing destroyed the embassy, killing three Chinese citizens and injuring more than twenty. Chinese officials were reluctant to accept the explanation by the United States that it had not intended to bomb their embassy. The bombing provoked widespread nationalist outrage in China, triggering large demonstrations at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing and at U.S. diplomatic facilities in other cities in China. In many cases, the Chinese government helped to facilitate these protests.⁷⁰ In the words of one Chinese analyst, the embassy bombing unified the Chinese people's feelings with China's national security interests.⁷¹ Chinese analysts considered NATO's humanitarian justification for the war to be a mere pretext. Instead, they portrayed the military campaign as an attempt by the United States to strengthen its

⁶⁹ Ibid, 255-256.

⁷⁰ David M. Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams: Managing U.S.-China Relations, 1989-2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 59-60.

⁷¹ 吴大辉: 《中俄战略协作伙伴关系: 十年实践的历史考察》, 第3页 [Wu Dahui, "China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations: Historical Observations on Ten Years of Practice," 3].

own influence in Europe, to increase the European countries' reliance on the United States, and to squeeze Russia out of the Balkans.⁷²

The bombing of the Chinese Embassy also strengthened the desire of China and Russia to coordinate their opposition to NATO's military campaign. On the day of the embassy bombing, Yeltsin issued a harsh condemnation. He repeated his call for an end to the NATO bombing campaign and argued that the embassy bombing vindicated Russia's opposition from the outset.⁷³ Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov indefinitely postponed a scheduled trip to Britain on May 8. That day, he phoned Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan to express Russia's condolences for the bombing. The two foreign ministers agreed that NATO should halt the bombing campaign immediately and pledged continued consultation on the Kosovo issue. On May 10, Yeltsin called Jiang Zemin on the hotline that the two countries had established. During this conversation, the two leaders agreed that their views on the Kosovo War were identical. The two leaders called for a halt to the bombing, which they agreed was a necessary precondition for a political solution to the crisis. They agreed that any peace agreement should be acceptable to Yugoslavia and should respect its sovereignty. Chernomyrdin, who was already heavily involved in diplomacy to end the conflict, made a quick visit on May 11 to Beijing, where he held an emergency meeting with Chinese officials on Kosovo.⁷⁴

Throughout May, the United States worked with Chernomyrdin and Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari, who was appointed EU envoy, to resolve the Kosovo crisis. The United States

⁷² 夏义善：《科索沃战争的实质及对世界战略格局的影响》，《和平与发展》李刊 1999 年第 3 期，第 17 页 [Xia Yishan, "The Essence of the Kosovo War and Its Influence on the World Strategic Structure," *Heping Yu Fazhan* 1999 (3): 17].

⁷³ 《人民日报》，1999 年 5 月 9 日。见杨闯，高飞，冯玉军著：《百年中俄关系》，北京：世界知识出版社，2006 年版，第 377-378 页 [Renmin Ribao, May 9, 1999. Cited in Yang Chuang, Gao Fei, Feng Yujun, eds., *One Hundred Years of China-Russia Relations* (Beijing: Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 2006), 377-378].

⁷⁴ 杨闯，高飞，冯玉军著：《百年中俄关系》，第 378 页 [Yang Chuang, Gao Fei, Feng Yujun, eds., *One Hundred Years of China-Russia Relations*, 378-379].

insisted upon a total pullout of Serb forces from Kosovo and an international peacekeeping force with NATO “at the core.” Chernomyrdin, who shuttled between meetings with Milosevic and with Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott and Ahtisaari, pushed unsuccessfully to soften these U.S. demands. The upcoming G-8 meeting, which was scheduled to be held from June 18-20 in Cologne, Germany, put pressure on Russia to help find a solution, as Yeltsin did not wish to attend the summit with the Kosovo crisis still unresolved. On May 27, during a meeting in Belgrade, Chernomyrdin told Milosevic that his continued refusal to accept NATO’s terms would probably mean the deployment of NATO ground troops. Russia would be unable to block such a deployment, Chernomyrdin explained. Facing this prospect, Milosevic became more flexible. On June 1, Talbott, Ahtisaari, and Chernomyrdin reached agreement on the terms that they would propose to Milosevic, which insisted upon the departure of all Serb forces from Kosovo and a peacekeeping force with “NATO at the core.” Milosevic accepted NATO’s conditions.⁷⁵

The Kosovo war thus reached its conclusion, though not before another tense moment in U.S.-Russia relations arose. A contingent of 200 Russian troops who were stationed in Bosnia as part of the peacekeeping force crossed into Serbia before seizing the airport in Pristina, the capital of Kosovo, without NATO authorization. Russia was unable to send reinforcements, however, because Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania denied the Russians the use of their airspace. The crisis fizzled. During the G-8 meeting, Clinton and Yeltsin spoke warmly of their joint efforts to solve the Kosovo problem and to preserve the U.S.-Russia relationship.⁷⁶

Despite the warm feelings at Cologne, the Kosovo War marked a new low point in the U.S.-Russia relationship, which had deteriorated steadily throughout the 1990s. For the first time in the post-Soviet era, Russia’s 2000 Military Doctrine listed the West as a security threat to

⁷⁵ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 256-262.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 262-265; Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 44.

Russia.⁷⁷ The Kosovo War, especially the bombing of the Chinese Embassy, also caused a sharp downturn in U.S.-China relations. One result was that voices in both China and Russia called for the formation of a China-Russia alliance. In Russia, some politicians and analysts argued that an alliance with China could help Russia resist the United States and NATO, which the Kosovo War had allegedly demonstrated was necessary.⁷⁸ Some analysts stopped short of calling for the formation of a formal military alliance but asserted that the Kosovo War offered opportunities for Russia to strengthen diplomatic coordination with China, as well as India.⁷⁹ Likewise, some Chinese security experts argued that the embassy bombing demonstrated the dire security threat that the United States posed to China, to which China should respond by quickly forming an alliance with Russia.⁸⁰

In neither country, however, did the mainstream view favor the formation of an alliance. Despite their concerns about unchecked U.S. power, both countries wanted to avoid a rupture in

⁷⁷ Военная доктрина Российской Федерации. 21 апреля 2000 г. [*Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation*, April 21, 2000], http://www.ng.ru/politics/2000-04-22/5_doktrina.html.

⁷⁸ Бажанов. Российско-китайские отношения на современном этапе. С. 421 [Bazhanov, "The Contemporary Stage of Russia-China Relations," 421]; Лукин. Медведь наблюдает за драконом. Образ Китая в России в XVII—XXI веках. Москва: Восток-Запад: АСТ, 2007, С. 367-380. The English-language version of this book is Alexander Lukin, *The Bear Watches the Dragon: Russia's Perceptions of China and the Evolution of Russian-Chinese Relations Since the Eighteenth Century*. Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2003; Rozman, "Sino-Russian Relations: Mutual Assessments and Predictions," 167. Дежин Е. Противовес связям с НАТО (КНР). Независимое Военное Обозрение. № 13 (136). 9.4.1999 г. [Yevgeniy Dezhin, "A counterweight to ties with NATO (the PRC), *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, 13 (136), April 9, 1999]. See also Alexander Timofeev, "Almost Relatives: Russia and China to Develop Military-Technical Cooperation and Strategic Military Partnership," *Vremya MN*, June 10, 1999, p. 6, translated and distributed by *ISI Emerging Markets*; Yevgeniy Dezhin, "A Strategic Partnership between Russia and China May Become a Counterbalance to Ties with NATO," *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, no. 13, April 9-15, 1999, translated and posted on *Johnson's Russia List*, May 7, 1999 (cdi.org). Cited in James M. Goldgeier and Michael McFaul, *Power and Purpose: U.S. Policy Toward Russia After the Cold War* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), 266, 434n78.

⁷⁹ Торкунов А. Международные отношения после косовского кризиса // *Международная Жизнь*. 1999 г. — № 12. — С. 46 [A. Torkunov, "International Relations after the Kosovo Crisis," *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn* ' 12 (1999): 46]; Яковлев А.Г. Международно-политические факторы развития стратегического взаимодействия России и Китая в XXI веке // *Россия и Китай: перспективы партнерства в АТР в XXI вв.*: Институт Дальнего Востока. М., 2000 [A.G. Yakovlev, *International-Political Factors in the Development of Strategic Interaction of Russia and China in the 21st Century* (Moscow: Institute of the Far East, 2000)]. Цит. по Ларин. Американский фактор в российско-китайском стратегическом партнерстве. С. 24, 29, 32 [Cited in Larin, "The American Factor in the Russia-China Strategic Partnership," 24, 29, 32].

⁸⁰ Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, 136-137fn2.

their relations with the United States. On June 1, just as the Kosovo War was reaching its resolution, Ivanov, the Russian foreign minister, visited Beijing. He and his counterpart, Tang Jiaxuan, issued a press release that expressed misgivings about NATO's military campaign in Kosovo and insisted that the defense of human rights could not be a pretext for violating state sovereignty. The two foreign ministers reiterated, however, that China and Russia would not form an alliance.⁸¹

The Kosovo War demonstrated the similarity of views that China and Russia held on important international issues and stimulated a degree of cooperation between the two countries. Both China and Russia were concerned about the unconstrained use of U.S. power in a unipolar world. They worried that the United States would remove important international decision-making from the UN Security Council's agenda, thus relegating China and Russia to the sidelines. For China and Russia, the Kosovo War was "the most dangerous manifestation of this tendency."⁸² In theory, it could set a precedent for U.S.-led intervention on issues such as Chechnya or Taiwan.⁸³ China and Russia could take only marginal satisfaction in the Kosovo issue's return, following the end of the war, to the Security Council, which eventually passed five resolutions on the matter.⁸⁴ Even in the case of Kosovo, China-Russia diplomatic coordination was not seamless. Russia's

⁸¹ 《中俄外长发表北京会晤联合公报》，《人民日报》，1999年6月3日 [“The Foreign Ministers of China and Russia Issue a Joint Declaration During Their Meeting in Beijing,” *Renmin Ribao*, June 3, 1999]; 李静杰：《中俄战略协作伙伴关系及其美国因素》，《东欧中亚研究》，2000年第3期，第10页 [Li Jingjie, “China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations and the American Factor,” *Dongou Zhongya Yanjiu* 2000 (3): 10]; 杨闯，高飞，冯玉军著：《百年中俄关系》，第378页 [Yang Chuang, Gao Fei, Feng Yujun, eds., *One Hundred Years of China-Russia Relations*, 380-382].

⁸² Лукин А.В. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 329 [Lukin, “From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 329].

⁸³ 李静杰：《中俄战略协作伙伴关系及其美国因素》，第12页 [Li Jingjie, “China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations and the American Factor,” 12].

⁸⁴ 吴大辉：《中俄战略协作伙伴关系：十年实践的历史考察》，第3-4页 [Wu Dahui, “China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations: Historical Observations on Ten Years of Practice,” 3-4].

diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict, which featured little coordination with China, raised some doubts in China about Russia's reliability as a partner.⁸⁵

Some analysts in China and Russia believed that the Kosovo War emboldened independence movements on Taiwan and in the Caucasus.⁸⁶ On July 9, 1999, Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui told the German newspaper *Deutsche Welle* that cross-Strait relations were "state-to-state or at least special state-to-state" in character. The government of the People's Republic of China had long threatened to respond with military force to a declaration of independence by Taiwan, and PRC leaders considered Lee's statement to be close to such a declaration.⁸⁷ The Taiwan white paper that China released in early 2000, which Premier Zhu Rongji affirmed was a direct response to Lee's remarks, stated for the first time that the PRC might respond with military force to Taiwan's "indefinite" refusal to negotiate on reunification.⁸⁸ The United States disassociated itself from Lee's remarks and engaged in diplomacy to ease cross-Strait tensions.⁸⁹

Meanwhile, in August and September of 1999, Chechen rebels led armed incursions into the Russian republic of Dagestan with the aim of securing the republic's independence. During this same period, the Russian government blamed Chechen terrorists for a series of deadly apartment bombings in Moscow and other Russian cities, though some accounts accuse the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) of carrying out the attacks and blaming them on Chechens in order to build public support for another war.⁹⁰ Whatever the truth about the apartment

⁸⁵ Rozman, *Chinese Strategic Thought Toward Asia*, 98.

⁸⁶ 吴大辉:《中俄战略协作伙伴关系:十年实践的历史考察》,第4页[Wu Dahui, "China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations: Historical Observations on Ten Years of Practice," 4]; Ларин. Американский фактор в российско-китайском стратегическом партнерстве. С. 22 [Alexander Larin, "The American Factor in the Russia-China Strategic Partnership," 22].

⁸⁷ Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams*, 61.

⁸⁸ Christensen, *The China Challenge*, 198.

⁸⁹ Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams*, 61-62.

⁹⁰ David Satter, *Darkness at Dawn: The Rise of the Russian Criminal State* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003).

bombings, the Russian government responded by launching its second war in Chechnya. This war, in turn, caused a further downturn in U.S.-Russia relations. U.S. officials became increasingly critical of the Russian conduct of the war, especially the military's treatment of the civilian population in Chechnya.

The Kosovo War, therefore, drew China and Russia together in their concerns about the new doctrine of humanitarian intervention. During this same period, the U.S. pursuit of missile defense systems was another issue on which the two countries held similar views.

U.S. missile defense

China and Russia found common cause in their opposition to the deployment of both national and theater missile defense systems by the United States. Both countries feared that the deployment of such systems could strengthen and prolong the era of U.S. primacy. Despite differences in the nature of their opposition to these systems stemming from contrasts in their own nuclear arsenals, China and Russia maintained a unified public position on the issue throughout this period.

U.S. interest in the deployment of missile defense systems gained momentum in the late 1990s, just as Chinese and Russian concerns about U.S. power were intensifying. President George H.W. Bush abandoned the "Star Wars" missile defense plans that his predecessor, Ronald Reagan, had pursued during the 1980s. Instead, Bush sought a more limited missile defense system to protect the United States against the accidental launch of Soviet missiles. By late 1991, U.S. officials discussed the possibility of designing the system to defend against threats from states such as Iran and North Korea as well.⁹¹ Stephen Hadley, who was serving as assistant secretary of

⁹¹ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 288-289.

defense at this time, wrote later that such a system could also be useful in combating a potential missile threat from China.⁹² Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Bush administration officials discussed the idea of a limited national missile defense system with their Russian counterparts, including the possibility of amending the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, but they focused primarily on securing a START II arms control treaty with Russia, which Yeltsin signed in 1992.⁹³

Instead of pursuing national missile defense, the Clinton administration chose to focus on the construction of theater missile defense systems to protect U.S. troops deployed overseas. The ABM Treaty, which the Clinton administration wished to preserve, prohibited national missile defense but allowed theater missile defense. Nevertheless, administration officials sought to win Russia's support for the deployment of such theater missile defense systems. They wanted to maintain Russia's good will in order to work with the Russians on traditional arms control agreements. In particular, they sought ratification of START II, Russia's support for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and the extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The Russian Duma failed to ratify START II until 2000, however. As U.S.-Russia relations grew progressively more acrimonious throughout the 1990s, especially as a result of NATO expansion, members of the Duma withheld their support for the treaty in protest.⁹⁴

Toward the end of the 1990s, events forced the Clinton administration to focus on national missile defense. In July 1998, a bipartisan commission led by Donald Rumsfeld reported that emerging missile capabilities posed a greater threat to the United States than the intelligence community had previously recognized. The Rumsfeld Commission predicted that Iran and North

⁹² Stephen J. Hadley, "A Call to Deploy," *Washington Quarterly* 23 (Summer 2000), 95-108. Cited in Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 289, 439n4.

⁹³ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 289-290.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 290-294.

Korea might gain the capability to strike U.S. territory within five years.⁹⁵ Events that summer seemed to offer support for the commission's thesis. Iran conducted its first flight of the Shahab 3 medium-range missile. Shortly thereafter, North Korea attempted a satellite launch, which was unsuccessful but nevertheless demonstrated that the North Koreans were developing the Taepodong I, a three-stage rocket. In March 1999, the same month that the NATO bombing campaign against Yugoslavia began, both houses of Congress overwhelmingly passed legislation calling upon the United States to deploy a missile defense system that would be capable of protecting the country as soon as "technologically possible."⁹⁶ Clinton signed the National Missile Defense Act into law in July.⁹⁷

Clinton announced that he would determine whether to build a national missile defense system based several criteria, including the technology's performance in tests, the effect on arms control and overall U.S. national security, the cost, and the nature of the threats facing the United States.⁹⁸ At the G-8 summit in Cologne, the United States and Russia discussed the possibility of modifying the ABM Treaty while working toward the arms reductions envisioned in a prospective START III Treaty. By late 1999, Russia showed signs of being amenable to such a deal. However, Yeltsin resigned from the presidency on the final day of the year. Clinton traveled to Moscow in June 2000, where he attempted to strike a deal with Yeltsin's successor, Vladimir Putin, to modify the ABM Treaty. Putin declined, having decided that he would wait for the next U.S. administration to address the matter.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Bradley Graham, *Hit to Kill: The New Battle over Shielding America from Missile Attack* (New York: Public Affairs, 2001). Cited in Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose* 294-295, 440n27.

⁹⁶ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 294-295.

⁹⁷ Craig Cerniello, "Clinton Signs Controversial NMD Legislation," *Arms Control Today*, July 1999, https://www.armscontrol.org/act/1999_07-08/nmdja99.

⁹⁸ Strobe Talbott, *The Russia Hand: A Memoir of Presidential Diplomacy* (New York: Random House, 2002), 380.

⁹⁹ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 295-298.

Meanwhile, Clinton had to decide during the summer of 2000 whether to build a national missile defense. Without an agreement from Russia to modify the ABM Treaty, the United States would have to notify the Russians of its intention to withdraw from the treaty six months in advance. Then the United States could begin construction of a national missile defense system in 2001 and complete it by 2005, by which time the potential threat from North Korea that the Rumsfeld Commission had identified might have matured. Clinton had made clear that he did not wish to abandon the treaty unilaterally. After initial tests produced mixed results and an NMD test failed in July 2000, Clinton announced on September 1 that he would leave the decision on missile defense to his successor. George W. Bush, the Republican nominee in that fall's presidential election, made clear that he intended to build a national missile defense system.¹⁰⁰

As the campaign to deploy missile defense systems gained momentum in the United States, China and Russia voiced their strenuous objections through coordinated diplomacy. Both countries perceived U.S. missile defense plans as an effort to consolidate the power advantage, already overwhelming, that the United States enjoyed and to threaten their deterrent capabilities. Russia had sharply reduced the size of its military following the breakup of the Soviet Union, but its nuclear forces were one of the few areas in which it maintained equality with the United States. Russian leaders and strategists viewed U.S. attempts to revise the ABM Treaty or otherwise change the existing strategic equilibrium as an attempt to weaken Russia. Some also professed the concern that U.S. national missile defense, designed initially as a limited system to protect the United States against rogue states, could eventually threaten Russia's own deterrent.¹⁰¹ China, which held a much smaller nuclear arsenal than Russia's, wished to ensure its own deterrent capability. Chinese leaders viewed U.S. missile defense plans as an attempt to weaken China's nuclear deterrent and

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 298.

¹⁰¹ Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 30.

thereby limit China's rise.¹⁰² Some analysts in both China and Russia also viewed U.S. missile defense plans as an effort by the United States to draw one or both countries into a ruinous arms race similar to the one that had helped to undermine the Soviet Union.¹⁰³

In a joint declaration issued in November 1998, China and Russia argued in favor of upholding the ABM Treaty.¹⁰⁴ In April 1999, they held joint consultations on the issue and agreed that their deputy foreign ministers would meet twice annually to discuss it.¹⁰⁵ Another joint declaration in December 1999 reiterated the two countries' common views on missile defense. These efforts culminated in a joint declaration on missile defense that the two countries' leaders issued during Putin's first official visit to China as president in July 2000. In this statement, China and Russia declared that the ABM Treaty was the cornerstone of international strategic stability and should be neither abandoned nor revised. The aim of U.S. plans for national missile defense, the two countries asserted, was to gain a unilateral military and security advantage. Such plans would harm the security of China and Russia and provoke a new arms race, they warned. Instead of undermining the ABM Treaty, the two countries argued, the world's leading countries should seek to reduce offensive strategic weapons and to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. In

¹⁰² 吕有志：《重新审视中国的安全环境》，《世界经济与政治》，2000年第1期，第59页 [Lu Youzhi, "A Re-examination of China's Security Environment," *Shijie Jingji Yu Zhengzhi* 2000 (1): 59]; 陈颖：《战区导弹防御系统与东亚安全形势》，《世界经济与政治论坛》，1999年第4期，第28页 [Chen Ying, "Theater Missile Defense System and the East Asian Security Situation," *Shijie Jingji Yu Zhengzhi Luntan* 1999 (4): 28]; 朱锋：《TMD与当前中美关系》，《世界经济与政治》，1999年第5期，第12页 [Zhu Feng, "TMD and Current China-U.S. Relations," *Shijie Jingji Yu Zhengzhi* 1999 (5), 12]. Cited in Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, 141fn10.

¹⁰³ Ларин А.Г. Китайская политика России при Президенте В.В. Путине. Проблемы Дальнего Востока. 2001 г. — № 3. — С. 17 [Alexander Larin, "Russia's China Policy under President Putin," *Problemy Dal'nego Vostoka* 2001 (3): 17]; 陈颖：《战区导弹防御系统与东亚安全形势》，《世界经济与政治论坛》，1999年第4期，第28页 [Chen Ying, "Theater Missile Defense System and the East Asian Security Situation," *Shijie Jingji Yu Zhengzhi Luntan* 1999 (4), 28]. Cited in Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, 141fn11.

¹⁰⁴ 杨闯，高飞，冯玉军著：《百年中俄关系》，第388页 [Yang Chuang, Gao Fei, Feng Yujun, eds., *One Hundred Years of China-Russia Relations*, 388].

¹⁰⁵ 吴大辉：《中俄战略协作伙伴关系：十年实践的历史考察》，第4页 [Wu Dahui, "China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations: Historical Observations on Ten Years of Practice," 4].

addition to their opposition to national missile defense, China and Russia also agreed that theater missile defense systems, which were not prohibited by the ABM Treaty, should not be deployed in ways that harmed other countries' security. In particular, the two countries declared that including Taiwan in a theater missile defense system was unacceptable.¹⁰⁶ Between 1999 and 2001, China and Russia introduced three resolutions in the UN General Assembly calling for the ABM Treaty's preservation, all of which received approval.¹⁰⁷

For both China and Russia, ballistic missile forces helped to offset the U.S. military advantage. In a potential conflict, the possession by China and Russia of ballistic missiles introduced the risk of nuclear escalation, which could force the United States or another adversary to exercise restraint in deploying conventional military forces. If the United States were to deploy reliable missile defense systems, then it could eliminate the threat of nuclear escalation by adversaries. In this way, the United States could ensure that potential military clashes would remain at the conventional level, where it held huge advantages that were likely to endure.¹⁰⁸ Under these circumstances, China and Russia might have been forced to increase their investments in conventional military capabilities and means of countering missile defense systems.¹⁰⁹

China and Russia maintained their united diplomatic front on missile defense during this period, despite some differences in their national interests on the issue. Russia's nuclear arsenal was much larger and more sophisticated than China's. Therefore, although Russia opposed U.S.

¹⁰⁶ 杨闯, 高飞, 冯玉军著: 《百年中俄关系》, 第 387-389 页 [Yang Chuang, Gao Fei, Feng Yujun, eds., *One Hundred Years of China-Russia Relations*, 387-389]; 吴大辉: 《中俄战略协作伙伴关系: 十年实践的历史考察》, 第 4 页 [Wu Dahui, "China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations: Historical Observations on Ten Years of Practice," 4].

¹⁰⁷ 吴大辉: 《中俄战略协作伙伴关系: 十年实践的历史考察》, 第 4 页 [Wu Dahui, "China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations: Historical Observations on Ten Years of Practice," 4].

¹⁰⁸ 朱锋: 《TMD 与当前中美关系》, 《世界经济与政治》, 1999 年第 5 期 [Zhu Feng, "TMD and Current China-U.S. Relations," *Shijie Jingji Yu Zhengzhi* 1999 (5)]. Cited in Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, 140.

¹⁰⁹ Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, 140.

efforts to revise the ABM Treaty or to withdraw from it altogether, Russian leaders remained largely confident that a limited U.S. national missile defense system, designed to protect the country against accidental launches or limited strikes by countries such as Iran or North Korea, would be unlikely to pose a serious threat to the Russian nuclear deterrent. Russia was thus willing to consider a deal with the United States to revise the ABM Treaty, especially because the United States had the option simply to abandon it. By striking a deal, Russia might be able to ensure deeper cuts in offensive strategic weapons than it could otherwise obtain. Putin was unwilling to strike such a deal during Clinton's last year in office, but he held open the possibility of an agreement with Clinton's successor. China, by contrast, feared that even a limited U.S. national missile defense system could threaten its nuclear deterrent.¹¹⁰

China was also much more concerned than was Russia about theater missile defense systems. China was especially worried about the possibility of Taiwan being included in a theater missile defense system that the United States might deploy in Asia. This would be equivalent to the restoration of the U.S.-Taiwan defensive alliance, in the view of Chinese analysts.¹¹¹ It would threaten the utility of China's short-range missile forces for dissuading Taiwan from pursuing independence, pressuring Taiwan to negotiate reunification, or deterring the United States from intervening in a potential conflict in the Taiwan Strait. China also worried about Japan's potential participation in a theater missile defense system, which could increase Japan's access to advanced nuclear technologies. If Japan were to decide in the future to develop a nuclear weapons program, possession of such technologies could accelerate this development.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ 吴大辉：《中俄战略协作伙伴关系：十年实践的历史考察》，第3页 [Wu Dahui, "China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations: Historical Observations on Ten Years of Practice," 3].

¹¹² Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, 140-141.

China's overall concerns about U.S. missile defense plans were greater than Russia's.¹¹³ This divergence of interests became clear later, when Putin mounted little resistance to President George W. Bush's decision on December 13, 2001, to withdraw from the ABM Treaty. China had hoped to maintain a united stance with Russia on this issue, but Putin bowed to the inevitable during a period of warming U.S.-Russia relations following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Between 1999 and 2001, missile defense was an issue that stimulated increased cooperation on international issues between China and Russia, though their cooperation proved ineffective in changing U.S. policy.¹¹⁴

Toward the Treaty of Good-Neighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation

Throughout the 1990s, broad agreement on a series of international issues pushed China and Russia closer together. The nearly simultaneous eastward expansion of NATO and the upgrading of the U.S.-Japan security alliance influenced the establishment of the China-Russia strategic partnership in 1996. Russia supported China's positions on Taiwan, Tibet, and Xinjiang, and China reciprocated by backing Russia's policies in Chechnya. During the period 1999-2001, a series of events, especially the Kosovo War and U.S. pursuit of missile defense, showcased further areas of China-Russia agreement.¹¹⁵

The shock of the Kosovo war stimulated a debate in China during the second half of 1999 about trends in international relations. This debate challenged many of the assumptions that had been prevalent throughout the decade. Among the main conclusions were that U.S. power was

¹¹³ Ibid. 141.

¹¹⁴ Ларин. Китайская политика России при Президенте В.В. Путине. С. 17 [Larin, "Russia's China Policy under President Putin," 17].

¹¹⁵ Лукин. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 329 [Lukin, "From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 329]; Бажанов. Российско-китайские отношения на современном этапе. С. 421 [Bazhanov, "The Contemporary Stage of Russia-China Relations," 421].

more resilient than expected, that multipolarity would not arrive quickly, and that the United States posed a greater threat than Chinese leaders had previously appreciated, particularly in light of its emerging interventionist impulses and its plans for missile defense. Chinese strategists resigned themselves to the belief that the United States would retain its dominance for a considerable part of the twenty-first century. At the same time, they reaffirmed their belief that a new cold war was not inevitable and that peace and development would remain the main themes of international relations. The main lessons were that China should avoid confronting the United States too directly, which would be likely to harm its own interests, and should participate enthusiastically in globalization. In this environment, China would continue to find common ground with Russia, and the two countries would continue their long-term effort to promote multipolarity.¹¹⁶

In addition to common interests, the two men who led these countries at the beginning of this period, Yeltsin and Jiang Zemin, also played important roles. Although Yeltsin began the presidency of post-Soviet Russia determined to integrate his country into the West, he soon recognized the importance of relations with China. Yeltsin persisted in his diplomacy toward China despite domestic opposition stemming from such issues as the border negotiations, Chinese immigration, and the alleged “China threat theory.” As discussed previously, it was Yeltsin who proposed the phrases “constructive partnership relations” and “strategic cooperative partnership relations,” which the two countries adopted in 1994 and 1996, respectively.¹¹⁷ Even some of Yeltsin’s harshest critics gave him credit for his policies toward China. “One of the few successes of the Yeltsin foreign policy—he didn’t have many, but one of the few successes was in relations

¹¹⁶ Rozman, *Chinese Strategic Thought Toward Asia*, 93, 98, 106-107; Aaron L. Friedberg, *A Contest for Supremacy: China, America, and the Struggle for Mastery in Asia* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2011), 126, 129.

¹¹⁷ 李静杰：《中俄战略协作伙伴关系及其美国因素》，第 14 页 [Li Jingjie, “China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations and the American Factor,” 14].

with China,” said the late Mikhail Titarenko, the longtime director of the Institute of the Far East and an advocate of close Russia-China ties in the post-Soviet era.¹¹⁸

By the end of his presidency, Yeltsin’s frustrations with the United States had accumulated, and his growing warmth toward China was apparent. In addition to the aggravations in U.S.-Russia relations that resulted from the Kosovo War and U.S. missile defense plans, the United States also criticized Russia for its actions in Chechnya and for its relationship with Iran, including arms sales and support for that country’s nuclear program.¹¹⁹ Yeltsin, like many Russians, believed that the United States had treated Russia like a defeated power, rather than as an equal.¹²⁰ During his final visit to China, in December 1999, Yeltsin responded harshly to Clinton’s condemnation of Russia’s actions in Chechnya. “Yesterday, Clinton permitted himself to put pressure on Russia,” he said. “It seems he has for a minute, for a second, for half a minute, forgotten that Russia has a full arsenal of nuclear weapons. He has forgotten about that.” Yeltsin added a further warning: “It has never been the case, and will not be the case, that he alone dictates to the world how to live, how to work, how to rest and so on. No, and again no. Things will be as we have agreed with Jiang Zemin. We will be saying how to live, not he alone.”¹²¹

Despite the shock that this statement aroused in the West, especially given that Yeltsin was speaking in China, it soon became apparent that these words were a burst of emotion, typical of Yeltsin, which did not signal a change in Russia’s foreign policy course.¹²² U.S.-Russia relations had reached a low point, but Yeltsin continued to recognize the importance of this relationship

¹¹⁸ Author’s interview with Mikhail Titarenko, director of the Institute of the Far East, Moscow, March 6, 2014. For a sampling of Titarenko’s views, see Лукин А.В. Медведь наблюдает за драконом. С. 347-361 367-368 [Lukin, *The Bear Watches the Dragon* (Russian edition), 347-361, 367-368].

¹¹⁹ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 267-286, 299-302.

¹²⁰ Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 20.

¹²¹ Michael Laris, “In China, Yeltsin Lashes Out at Clinton,” *Washington Post*, Dec. 10, 1999, A35.

¹²² Лукин. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 324-325 [Lukin, “From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 324-325].

throughout his presidency. At the same time, he viewed China as a valuable partner in the attempt to restrain U.S. foreign policy. As he recalled in his memoirs, “China had always supported my concept of a multipolar world. The Russian-Chinese dialogue was one of the few levers that could turn the concept into a reality.” Yeltsin gave credit to his “meetings in shirtsleeves” with Jiang Zemin for the improvement in China-Russia relations.¹²³

Yeltsin and Jiang played crucial roles in the development of China-Russia relations during the 1990s, but their successors continued to nurture the relationship. Several weeks after his election to the presidency in March 2000, Putin made clear that he, like Yeltsin, believed that Russia could turn to China as an outlet in order to relieve Western pressure. “If the West threatens us and frightens us with sanctions, then in fact it forces us to turn to the East, it pushes Russia in this direction,” he told journalists. “The West conducts the same policies in relations to those countries, which objectively can become our allies.”¹²⁴ During Putin’s first year in the presidency, the two countries continued to engage in diplomatic coordination, though Russia’s reluctance to choose China as a partner over the United States limited their progress.¹²⁵ Putin expressed his wariness about the implications of China’s growing power, and Asia’s economic rise more broadly, for Russia’s underdeveloped regions of Siberia and the Russian Far East during a visit to the region in July 2000. “If in the coming period we don’t make real efforts to develop the Far East,” Putin said, “then the Russian population a few decades from now will primarily speak Japanese, Chinese, and Korean.”¹²⁶

¹²³ Boris Yeltsin, *Midnight Diaries*, transl. Catherine A. Fitzpatrick (New York: PublicAffairs, 2000), 163-164.

¹²⁴ Независимая газета. 2000. 18 апреля [*Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, April 18, 2000]. Цит. по: Ларин А.Г. Китайская политика России при Президенте В.В. Путине. С. 11, 18 n15 [Larin, “Russia’s China Policy under President Putin,” 11, 18 n15].

¹²⁵ Gilbert Rozman, “The Sino-Russian Strategic Partnership: How Close? Where To” in *The Future of China-Russia Relations*, ed. James Bellacqua (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2009), 13-14; Gilbert Rozman, *Chinese Strategic Thought Toward Asia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 98.

¹²⁶ Ларин. Китайская политика России при Президенте В.В. Путине. С. 16 [Alexander Larin, “Russia’s China Policy under President Putin,” 16].

Despite such concerns, Putin continued to cultivate China's partnership. When Putin made his first visit to China as president in July 2000, he and Jiang reaffirmed their support for the development of a multipolar world.¹²⁷ The two leaders reiterated that their countries held common views on a range of international issues, devoting special attention to the issue of missile defense.¹²⁸ During this visit, Putin explained his approach in an interview with journalists: "We will give both European pragmatism and Asian wisdom their due, and therefore the foreign policy of Russia will be balanced."¹²⁹ He added that Russia should "lean on both wings—the European and the Asian" and that he considered relations with China to be "one of our main priorities."¹³⁰ Later that year, Putin penned an article in which he argued that Russia, though it had never forgotten that most of its territory lay in Asia, nevertheless had failed to use this fact to its advantage in the past. In the future, he argued, Russia should develop political and economic cooperation with the countries of the Asia-Pacific region.¹³¹

While Putin sought balance in Russia's foreign policy, leaning on the country's eastern and western wings, a series of events in 2000 and 2001 caused U.S.-China relations to deteriorate further while raising expectations for improved U.S.-Russia relations. In early 2000, the people of Taiwan elected a pro-independence president, Chen Shui-bian. The winner in that year's U.S.

¹²⁷ Лукин. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 327 [Lukin, "From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 327].

¹²⁸ 杨闯, 高飞, 冯玉军著: 《百年中俄关系》, 第 387-389 页 [Yang Chuang, Gao Fei, Feng Yujun, eds., *One Hundred Years of China-Russia Relations*, 387-389].

¹²⁹ ИТАР-ТАСС. 2000. 16 июля [ITAR-TASS, July 16, 2000]. Цит. по: Ларин. Китайская политика России при Президенте В.В. Путине. С. 11, 18n14 [Cited in Larin, "Russia's China Policy under President Putin," 11, 18n14].

¹³⁰ Путин В.В. Интервью китайской газете «Жэньминь жибао», китайскому информационному агентству Синьхуа и телекомпании РТР, 16 июля 2000 г., <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24168> [Vladimir Putin, interview with Chinese newspaper *Renmin Ribao*, the Chinese information agency Xinhua, and the television company RTR, June 16, 2000]. Цит. по: Лукин А.В. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 327 [Cited in Lukin, "From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 327].

¹³¹ Статья Президента России Владимира Путина «Россия: новые восточные перспективы», 9 ноября 2000 г., <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/21132> [Article of the President of Russia Vladimir Putin, "Russia: New Eastern Perspectives," Nov. 9, 2000. Цит. по: Лукин. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 326 [Cited in Lukin, "From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 326].

presidential election, George W. Bush, called China a “strategic competitor” and criticized the Clinton administration for being too soft on China. On April 1, 2001, a Chinese fighter jet collided with a U.S. EP-3 surveillance aircraft that was flying in international airspace near the southern coast of China. The Chinese pilot was killed, but the U.S. Navy pilot successfully made an emergency landing on Hainan Island. China held the crew for ten days and carefully inspected the airplane and its components, including its surveillance technology. China released the crew after U.S. officials said that they “regretted” the incident, a statement that China portrayed to its own people as an apology. During that same month, the Bush administration announced an arms sale to Taiwan worth more than \$12 billion. Bush also told a television interviewer that the United States would “do whatever it takes” to help Taiwan defend itself.¹³²

Meanwhile, Bush had entered office seeking to improve relations with Russia. Rather than emphasizing Russia’s domestic politics, Bush sought to reach agreement with Russia on issues of international security. Above all, he sought Russia’s agreement to a revision of the ABM Treaty that would allow the United States to build a limited missile defense system. Bush’s advisers also saw Russia as a potential partner in containing China, which the administration viewed as a rising power that posed a potential threat to U.S. security in the future.¹³³

Against this strategic background, China and Russia took important steps during the summer of 2001 to advance their relationship. In June, the Shanghai Five added a sixth member, Uzbekistan, and reconstituted itself as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Having originally come together in order to promote demilitarization and military confidence-building measures in the border regions, these countries now set up a permanent organization that would seek to combat what the Chinese called the “three evil forces” of separatism, extremism, and

¹³² Christensen, *The China Challenge*, 204-205.

¹³³ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 311-312.

terrorism. The SCO members agreed to set up a secretariat and an anti-terrorism center, both of which opened in 2004.¹³⁴

The progress in China-Russia relations during the first post-Soviet decade, including the two countries' intensified cooperation on international issues during the period 1999-2001, culminated in the signing of the Treaty of Good-Neighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation on July 16, 2001. The treaty summarized the consensus that the two countries had achieved regarding their relationship, including both bilateral and international aspects. It did not include a mutual defense clause and therefore did not signify the formation of a military alliance. However, it did contain some pledges that were typical of alliances.¹³⁵ For example, Article 9 stated that if either party confronted the threat of aggression or perceived a risk to its peace and security, the two countries would immediately consult each other in order to eliminate such threats.

In recognition of the harm that both countries had suffered from the Sino-Soviet split, China and Russia sought to avoid repeating that history. The treaty therefore contained several clauses designed to prevent either country from harming the other's interests. China and Russia promised not to use or threaten force against the other. They pledged not to join an alliance or bloc that would compromise the other's sovereignty, security, and territorial integrity, nor to allow any other party to use its territory for that purpose. They agreed to uphold the five principles of peaceful coexistence, including the commitment not to interfere in each other's internal affairs.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ 杨闯, 高飞, 冯玉军著: 《百年中俄关系》, 第 387-389 页 [Yang Chuang, Gao Fei, Feng Yujun, eds., *One Hundred Years of China-Russia Relations*, 387].

¹³⁵ Elizabeth Wishnick, "Russia and China: Brothers Again?" *Asian Survey* 41 (2001): 805.

¹³⁶ "Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation Between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation," http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/2649_665393/t15771.shtml. For the Russian text, see Договор о добрососедстве, дружбе и сотрудничестве между Российской Федерацией и Китайской Народной Республикой, http://www.mid.ru/ru/maps/cn/-/asset_publisher/WhKWb5DVBqKA/content/id/576870. For the Chinese text, see 中俄签署睦邻友好合作条约, <http://www.mfa.gov.cn/chn/pds/ziliao/tytj/t11111.htm>.

Assessments of the 2001 treaty varied. Some analysts argued that it signified movement by China and Russia toward an alliance against the United States and the West, while others argued that the treaty was merely declaratory and had no practical meaning. The treaty clearly did not create an alliance. Unlike the treaties that the Soviet Union signed with China's Nationalist government in 1945 and with the People's Republic of China in 1950, the 2001 treaty did not contain a mutual defense clause, the crucial feature of formal military alliances.¹³⁷ Instead, the treaty envisioned parallel action in areas in which their interests coincided.¹³⁸ Despite the claim by China and Russia that their relationship was not directed against any third party, their frequent criticisms of U.S. "hegemonism and power politics" gave the relationship an unmistakable anti-American coloration that had been present at least since the formation of the "strategic partnership" in 1996.¹³⁹ Nevertheless, neither China nor Russia viewed the United States as an enemy. On the contrary, both countries sought economic and political cooperation with the West.¹⁴⁰ Despite the downturn in U.S.-China relations between 1999 and 2001, China chose not to abandon the strategy of multilateralism and reassurance of neighbors that it had adopted starting in 1996, though some exceptions were apparent in Northeast Asia, where China experienced tensions in relations with Japan and South Korea.¹⁴¹ In the view of some Russian analysts, China was not even averse to "struggling with 'hegemonism' with others' hands."¹⁴² Nor did Russia renounce its search for

¹³⁷ Лукин. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 329 [Lukin, "From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 329].

¹³⁸ Титаренко М.Л. Геополитическое значение Дальнего Востока. Россия, Китай и другие страны Азии. Москва. Памятники исторической мысли. 2008. С. 244 [M.L. Titarenko, *The Geopolitical Meaning of the Far East: Russia, China, and Other Countries of Asia* (Moscow: Pamyatniki Istoricheskoi Mysli, 2008), 244].

¹³⁹ Ларин. Американский фактор в российско-китайском стратегическом партнерстве. С. 20 [Alexander Larin, "The American Factor in the Russia-China Strategic Partnership," 20].

¹⁴⁰ Лукин. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 330-332 [Lukin, "From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 330-332].

¹⁴¹ Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, 26.

¹⁴² Лукин. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 326 [Lukin, "From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 326].

improved ties with the United States. The formation of a formal China-Russia military alliance, in the view of many analysts, would become likely only if both countries came to perceive a threat from the United States that they considered more dangerous than the consequences of renouncing cooperation with the United States and other Western countries.¹⁴³

The decision by China and Russia to refrain from forming an alliance did not mean, however, that the treaty was devoid of meaning. In the view of some analysts, the 2001 treaty signified the formation of a China-Russia quasi-alliance.¹⁴⁴ The treaty's provisions for consultations in the face of a threat to either country's security raised the possibility that the two countries might act as allies in a crisis. Even if no such contingency were to arise, however, the treaty reflected a tendency that could become increasingly important in the future. This tendency was the desire of two great powers, both of which possessed nuclear weapons and held seats on the UN Security Council, to increase cooperation across a broad range of international issues on which they held similar views. China and Russia had not yet attained sufficient power to balance the United States effectively, but they could at least register their diplomatic opposition to certain trends in U.S. foreign policy.¹⁴⁵ They could also avoid international diplomatic isolation.

In the short run, while maintaining dialogue and cooperation with the United States whenever possible, the two countries could also resist U.S. foreign policy decisions that they opposed, in a pattern that one Chinese analyst called "struggle but don't break, resist but don't end up in a deadlock."¹⁴⁶ Through bilateral diplomatic coordination, China and Russia could rally other

¹⁴³ Ibid, 332.

¹⁴⁴ 冯玉军:《对中俄战略协作伙伴关系的再思考》,第2页[Feng Yujun, "Rethinking China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations," 2]; 李静杰:《中俄战略协作伙伴关系及其美国因素》,第43页[Li Jingjie, "China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations and the American Factor," 43].

¹⁴⁵ Лукин. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 332 [Lukin, "From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 332].

¹⁴⁶ 吴大辉:《中俄战略协作伙伴关系:十年实践的历史考察》,第5页[Wu Dahui, "China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations: Historical Observations on Ten Years of Practice," 5].

countries to their side, possibly affecting U.S. calculations. The two countries could also signal to the United States that in the long run, as China continued its rise and Russia regained its strength, the two countries might eventually acquire the capabilities to constitute an effective counterbalancing force against the United States.

Conclusion

Between 1996 and 2001, China and Russia continued to make progress in their relationship. Through their agreements on demilitarization and confidence-building measures in the border regions, the two countries continued to consolidate their “strategic rear.” Their declaration on multipolarity in 1997 signaled their rejection of a U.S.-dominated international community that would censure governments for failing to meet standards of liberal democracy and human rights. Although this declaration amounted to rhetorical support rather than power aggregation, it demonstrated the growing convergence of the two countries’ national identities, as well as their common desire to refashion the international normative environment in a way that would be conducive to the pursuit of their great-power aspirations.

The world remained unipolar during this period, but both countries continued to view power in dynamic terms and to make projections for the future. The revival of Russia’s relative power still lay several years in the future, and national weakness therefore constrained the country’s options. During the early stages of his presidency, Putin appeared to conclude that Russia’s angry denunciations of U.S. foreign policy during the late Yeltsin era telegraphed weakness without achieving results. He therefore pursued a pragmatic approach toward relations with the United States. As discussed in the next chapter, he attempted to reorient Russia’s foreign policy sharply toward the West following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. China,

meanwhile, enthusiastically analyzed trends in relative power, particularly during the debate on peace and development that occurred during the second half of 1999, following the war in Kosovo. Although Chinese strategists remained confident of their country's long-term rise to power, the main conclusions that they drew from this debate were that U.S. primacy was likely to last for many years to come and that China's rise would therefore be a lengthy process. This conclusion offered further support for Deng's foreign policy of lying low and biding time.

In the aftermath of the Kosovo War, some analysts in both countries proposed the formation of a China-Russia alliance. Although these arguments failed to carry the day in either country, both countries debated the idea more seriously than ever before in the post-Soviet era. For reasons discussed throughout this study, China and Russia refrained from forming an alliance and therefore eschewed "hard balancing." Some scholars argue, however, that China and Russia engaged in "soft balancing" against the United States during this period. Instead of seeking to change the balance of power through traditional or "hard" balancing, states use soft balancing to seek the best possible outcome, from their perspective, within the existing balance of power. In this view, several actions by China and Russia during this period constituted soft balancing, including their formation of a strategic partnership in 1996, their opposition to the Kosovo War, resistance to U.S. missile defense plans, robust Russian arms sales to China, and the 2001 treaty.¹⁴⁷ Despite conceptual problems with the notion of soft balancing, which are discussed in Chapter 1, several instances of cooperation by China and Russia that occurred during this period fit scholars'

¹⁴⁷ Robert A. Pape, "Soft Balancing Against the United States," *International Security* 30, no. 1 (2005): 7-45; T.V. Paul, "Soft Balancing in the Age of U.S. Primacy," *International Security* 30, no. 1 (2005): 46-71; Stephen M. Walt, *Taming American Power: The Global Response to U.S. Primacy* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005); Stephen M. Walt, "Alliances in a Unipolar World," *World Politics* 61, no. 1 (2009): 103-106.

description of soft balancing. Diplomatic coordination that falls short of balancing can still be significant for policymakers and is therefore worthy of analysis.¹⁴⁸

One approach is to assess the significance of the triangular relationship of the United States, Russia, and China during this period. In the view of one Chinese analyst, from the end of the Cold War until 1994, a period during which Russia actively sought to join the West, “triangular relations” did not exist in any meaningful sense. Beginning in 1994, however, the triangle began to reemerge. Tension in U.S. relations with both China and Russia pushed the two countries together, and Russia sought to use its relationship with China as leverage in relations with the United States.¹⁴⁹ When China and Russia formed their strategic partnership in April 1996, Igor Ivanov, a career diplomat who was to succeed Primakov as foreign minister in 1998, argued that the triangle continued to exert influence.¹⁵⁰ The two countries’ common concerns about U.S. power and foreign policy were apparent both in declaratory form, as in joint statements and common positions in the United Nations, and in Russia’s willingness to contribute to the buildup of China’s military capabilities through arms sales.¹⁵¹

The limitations of such cooperation were apparent, however. The first form of cooperation was limited to rhetorical agreement. Despite the potential significance of this rhetoric for the shaping of the future world order, it was ineffective in changing U.S. foreign policy in the short run. Russia’s arms sales to China also had limited utility, both because the U.S. military advantage over China remained significant and because military coordination between China and Russia

¹⁴⁸ Daniel H. Nexon, “The Balance of Power in the Balance,” *World Politics* 61, no. 2 (2009): 330-359.

¹⁴⁹ 李静杰：《中俄战略协作伙伴关系及其美国因素》，第 12 页 [Li Jingjie, “China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations and the American Factor,” 12].

¹⁵⁰ Igor Ivanov, *The New Times*, April 26, 1996. 见李静杰：《中俄战略协作伙伴关系及其美国因素》，第 3 期，第 12 页 [Cited in Li Jingjie, “China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations and the American Factor,” 12].

¹⁵¹ Ларин. Американский фактор в российско-китайском стратегическом партнерстве. С. 25 [Alexander Larin, “The American Factor in the Russia-China Strategic Partnership,” 25].

lagged far behind that between the United States and its allies in NATO and the Asia-Pacific region.¹⁵² If true triangular diplomacy requires the ability of two countries to affect the third country's foreign policy through bilateral diplomatic coordination, then the triangle seemed to have little meaning during this period. Despite Yeltsin's desire to "lean on the shoulder of China" and his view of China as a "lever" that could promote multipolarity, China and Russia were unable to change U.S. foreign policy during this period, whether on NATO expansion, the Kosovo War, U.S. pursuit of missile defense, or other issues.¹⁵³

The U.S. intelligence community's interest in China-Russia relations, which had subsided following the end of the Cold War, revived somewhat as a result of the diplomatic convergence between China and Russia at the close of the twentieth century. However, a U.S. National Intelligence Estimate, disseminated in September 2000, concluded that the implications of China-Russia cooperation for U.S. strategic interests were marginal. China and Russia remained relatively weak in comparison to the United States, government analysts concluded, and the two countries remained reluctant to challenge the United States, despite their rhetoric.¹⁵⁴ When China and Russia signed the 2001 treaty, the Bush administration professed its lack of concern.¹⁵⁵ During the first post-Cold War decade, the notion of a powerful China-Russia partnership that could exert

¹⁵² Ларин. Китайская политика России при Президенте В.В. Путине. С. 17 [Larin, "Russia's China Policy under President Putin," 17].

¹⁵³ Тренин. Китайская проблема России. С. 21 [Trenin, *Russia's China Problem*, 21]; Bobo Lo, "The Russia-China-US Triangle and its Post-Cold War Fate," in *Eurasia's Ascent in Energy and Geopolitics: Rivalry or Partnership for Russia, China and Central Asia?*, edited by Robert E. Bedeski and Niklas Swanström (New York: Routledge, 2012), 37-38; Bobo Lo, *A Wary Embrace: What the China-Russia Relationship Means for the World* (Sydney: Penguin Random House Australia, 2017).

¹⁵⁴ "Russian-Chinese Relations: Prospects and Implications (Update)," U.S. National Intelligence Estimate, no. 2000-10C, September 2000,

https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0005526244.pdf. Cited in Robert Sutter, "Foreword," in Michael S. Chase et. al, *Russia-China Relations: Assessing Common Ground and Strategic Fault Lines*, The National Bureau of Asian Research, NBR Special Report #66, July 2017, v.

¹⁵⁵ Jane Perlez, "White House Not Concerned About China-Russia Pact," *The New York Times*, July 16, 2001. Cited in Kuchins, "Russian Perspectives on China," 36 n14.

a strong influence on the international system loomed as a possible future development, not a present reality.

Chapter 4

From the Terrorist Attacks of September 11, 2001 to the War in Georgia

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 in New York and Washington occurred just months after China and Russia raised their bilateral relationship to new heights with the signing of the Treaty of Good-Neighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation. The attacks changed the course of world politics, including relations within the U.S.-Russia-China triangle. On one level, the attacks unified the three countries, all of which faced threats from terrorism. At the same time, differences in the three countries' national interests persisted. In the aftermath of the attacks, Russia tilted strongly toward the United States. This caused some Chinese policymakers and analysts to worry, as they had during the period following the breakup of the Soviet Union, that Russia would pursue a pro-Western foreign policy at China's expense.

The post-September 11 U.S.-Russia honeymoon, however, proved short-lived. Disagreements between the two countries on a variety of issues, including the U.S. war in Iraq and, especially, the wave of color revolutions in the former Soviet Union, caused U.S.-Russia relations to deteriorate as the middle of the decade approached. China's concerns that Russia, in the pursuit of closer ties with the West, would ignore China and leave it isolated therefore proved unfounded. Meanwhile, at virtually the same time that U.S.-Russia relations deteriorated, U.S.-China relations improved considerably.

The net effect of these changes was that joint efforts by China and Russia to resist U.S. foreign policy on the global level, which were a focal point between 1999 and 2001, received less emphasis in the years following the terrorist attacks. At the bilateral level, China-Russia relations during this period enjoyed only mixed success. The two countries almost entirely resolved their

border dispute by 2004, and Russian arms sales to China remained strong until 2005. Yet the two countries also encountered some difficulties in their bilateral relations, particularly in their efforts to expand energy cooperation. During this period, therefore, China-Russia cooperation focused primarily on the regional level. The two countries found common cause in their opposition to color revolutions and to U.S. efforts to promote democracy abroad. This issue drew special attention in China-Russia relations when the upheaval reached Central Asia in 2005.

The positive trends in U.S.-China relations continued during the years leading up to the 2008 financial crisis. China continued to pursue a strategy of reassurance toward its neighbors, with some important exceptions, while the United States sought to engage China as a “responsible stakeholder” in the international system. By contrast, U.S.-Russia relations deteriorated further. Russian President Vladimir Putin harshly criticized the United States during a speech at the Munich Security Conference in February 2007, and Russia’s war with Georgia in August 2008 brought the U.S.-Russia relationship to a new post-Cold War low.

China and Russia continued to emphasize their support for a multipolar world, but their cooperation at the global level remained limited during this period, partly because the two countries’ relations with the United States were on different tracks. China offered some limited diplomatic support to Russia during the war in Georgia but declined to join Russia in recognizing the independence of two breakaway regions from that country. During this period, China-Russia energy cooperation was slow to develop, and Russian arms sales to China fell sharply after 2005. The financial crisis that began in September 2008, just one month after the war in Georgia, administered another shock to world politics with repercussions for relations within the U.S.-Russia-China triangle.

China and Russia Confront Terrorism, the Iraq War, and Color Revolutions (2001-2005)

The impact of September 11, 2001

The war on terrorism that the United States waged in response to the September 11 attacks opened avenues for U.S. cooperation with Russia and China. The three countries enjoyed broad consensus in their opposition to terrorist organizations.¹ Russia and China also saw an opportunity to strengthen U.S. support for their own struggles with terrorism. In the years following the attacks, the United States rewarded both countries for their support. The Bush administration curtailed its criticism of Russia's domestic policies, including its conduct of the war in Chechnya.² In August 2002, the United States publicly classified the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), a radical organization seeking independence for China's northwestern region of Xinjiang, as an international terrorist organization linked to Al Qaeda.³ Terrorism was also an area of agreement in China-Russia relations. The two countries were already engaged in the struggle against terrorist threats and now vowed to strengthen their efforts.⁴ In the view of some analysts, the period following the attacks was one in which each country in the U.S.-Russia-China triangle had reason to welcome improvements in the bilateral relationship of the other two.⁵

¹ 邢广程：《由中俄美关系变化的思考》，《现代国际关系》，2003年第4期，第17页 [Xing Guangcheng, "Reflections Occasioned by Changes in China-Russia-U.S. relations," *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* 2003 (4): 17].

² James M. Goldgeier and Michael McFaul, *Power and Purpose: U.S. Policy Toward Russia After the Cold War* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), 316.

³ Thomas J. Christensen, *The China Challenge: Shaping the Choices of a Rising Power* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2015), 210-211.

⁴ Лукин А.В. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. Россия и Китай после распада СССР // Россия и Китай: четыре века взаимодействия—история, Современное состояние и перспективы развития российско-китайских отношений / Под ред. А.В. Лукина. М.: Весь мир, 2013. С.334 [A.V. Lukin, "From Normalization to Strategic Partnership. Russia and China After the Collapse of the USSR," in *Russia and China: Four Centuries of Interaction—History, Contemporary Conditions, and Prospects for the Development of Russia-China Relations*, ed. A.V. Lukin (Moscow: Ves' Mir, 2013), 334].

⁵ See for example 冯绍雷：《没有终结的“终结”——“9·11”后中，美，俄关系变化的现状，动因，特点与前景》，《中俄关系的历史与现实》栾景河主编，开封：河南大学出版社，2004年，第729页 [Feng Shaolei,

Russia played an especially active role in assisting the U.S.-led war on terrorism. On the day of the attacks, Putin was the first foreign leader to call the White House to offer his support. Putin saw the attacks as an opportunity to improve relations with the United States following a downturn in this relationship during the final years of Boris Yeltsin's presidency. Crucially, Putin gave his blessing to the establishment of U.S. and NATO military bases in Central Asia to support military operations in Afghanistan. Most of Putin's top advisers opposed this step. Minister of Defense Sergei Ivanov, for example, argued against a U.S. military presence in Central Asia, warning that the United States would inevitably use this presence to promote democracy in the region.⁶ Putin himself was opposed until it became clear that he could not dissuade the leaders of the Central Asian countries from offering the United States access to their territories for military bases. On September 22, after meeting with his advisers in the Black Sea resort of Sochi, Putin called President George W. Bush to inform him that Russia would not object to U.S. military bases in Central Asia, on the condition that they would be temporary and used for fighting terrorism.⁷ China also did not stand in the way of the U.S. military presence in Central Asia, despite the region's proximity to its western border.

Both Russia and China offered further support, though not military forces, for the war on terrorism. On September 24, Putin announced a five-point plan to support U.S. efforts. Putin offered to share intelligence, allow flights providing humanitarian assistance to use Russian airspace, work with the Central Asian countries to allow similar access to airspace in their region, participate in international search and rescue missions, and increase direct military and

"There is No 'End' to the End": The Current Situation of, Motivations for, Special Characteristics of, and Prospects for the Big Changes in China-U.S.-Russia Relations after '9/11'," in *The History and Current Reality of China-Russia Relations*, ed. Luan Jinghe (Kaifeng: Henan University Press, 2004), 729].

⁶ *Putin, Russia, and the West*, BBC documentary, 2012. Cited in Angela E. Stent, *The Limits of Partnership: U.S.-Russian Relations in the Twenty-First Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 65, 333 n60).

⁷ Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 65.

humanitarian assistance to the Northern Alliance, the primary force in Afghanistan that the United States and its allies would rely upon to fight the Taliban.⁸ China played a less significant role than Russia's but also took important steps. For example, China urged its close ally, Pakistan, to support U.S. efforts to topple the Taliban regime, even though Pakistan's security and intelligence services had played a crucial role in creating it. China also offered aid to Pakistan with the aim of bolstering President Pervez Musharraf, who was sure to face domestic criticism for supporting the United States.⁹

In the months following the attacks, Putin demonstrated that his diplomatic turn toward the United States was not limited to the war on terrorism. Putin soon announced that Russia would close its signals intelligence site in Lourdes, Cuba, and its naval base in Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam. Both decisions were driven by economic factors and the need to reduce Russia's worldwide military presence, but the United States viewed both steps as gestures of goodwill.¹⁰ More significantly, Putin also took a cooperative approach to arms control and to Russia's relationship with NATO, two issues that had bedeviled U.S.-Russia relations during the preceding years. Putin's cooperative approach generated optimism about a new era of warm U.S.-Russia relations, but it also aroused concerns in China. Chinese leaders were displeased with some of the concessions that Russia made toward the United States, disappointed that Russia had in their view failed to consult adequately with China before making these decisions, and convinced that Putin received little in return for his concessions.

With respect to missile defense, an issue on which Russia and China had closely coordinated their diplomacy since 1998, Putin showed restraint in his opposition to U.S. plans. On

⁸ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 313.

⁹ Christensen, *The China Challenge*, 206.

¹⁰ Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 67.

December 13, 2001, Bush informed Putin that the United States would withdraw from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. Under the terms of the treaty, the withdrawal would take effect six months later, leaving no restraints on the development of national missile defense systems. The Bush administration made this decision after failing to secure Russia's support for amendments to the treaty that would have allowed the United States to build limited national missile defense systems to address threats from states such as Iran and North Korea.¹¹ Putin acknowledged that the United States had the right to withdraw from the treaty, adding that "Russia, along with the U.S., as distinguished from other nuclear powers, has long had an effective system of overcoming anti-missile defenses. For this reason I can state with complete confidence that the decision taken by the president of the U.S. presents no threat to the national security of the Russian Federation."¹²

In the view of Chinese leaders and analysts, Putin effectively gave tacit approval to U.S. withdrawal from the treaty. This was disappointing to Chinese leaders. Together with their Russian counterparts, they had expended considerable diplomatic energy in recent years defending the treaty, which they regarded as a bedrock of strategic stability.¹³ The Chinese government, in contrast to Putin's mild response, strongly condemned the U.S. decision.¹⁴ The contrasting approaches of China and Russia to U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty revealed, once again, their diverging interests on this issue. Russian leaders were displeased with the U.S. withdrawal

¹¹ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 322-323; Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 72-73.

¹² Quoted in Strobe Talbott, *The Russia Hand: A Memoir of Presidential Diplomacy* (New York: Random House, 2002), 418-419. See also "Interview with Vladimir Putin," *Financial Times*, December 15, 2001.

¹³ 吴大辉:《中俄战略协作伙伴关系:十年实践的历史考察》,《俄罗斯中亚东欧研究》2006年第3期,第5页[Wu Dahui, "China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations: Historical Observations on Ten Years of Practice," *Eluosi Zhongya Dongou Yanjiu* 2006 (3): 5].

¹⁴ 《章启月就美国将退出《反导条约》等问题答记者问》,中国日报网站,2001年12月13日[Zhang Qiyue answers journalists' questions on such topics as the U.S. withdrawal from the "Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty," *Zhongguo Ribao* website, December 13, 2001], <http://www.china.com.cn/chinese/2001/Dec/86174.htm>.

but remained confident that their nuclear arsenal could overwhelm any potential U.S. national missile defense, thus preserving the Russian nuclear deterrent. In any case, Russia could not block the United States from abandoning the treaty. China, by contrast, was concerned primarily about U.S. deployment of theater missile defense in the Asia-Pacific region. Although the ABM Treaty did not prohibit the deployment of theater missile defense systems, China had hoped to maintain solidarity with Russia in support of the treaty as part of a joint effort to block U.S. missile defense deployment in any form.¹⁵

Bush and Putin also reached agreement on the next stage of nuclear arms reductions. In May 2002, during Bush's first trip to Moscow, the two presidents signed the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT). In this treaty, both countries agreed to reduce their arsenals to a level between 1,700 and 2,200 deployed nuclear warheads by December 31, 2012.¹⁶ During his presidential campaign, Bush had proposed unilateral reductions of the U.S. nuclear arsenal to this level. Putin himself had previously announced that Russia would enact unilateral cuts to the level of 1,500 deployed nuclear warheads, a level that would have been even lower than the one envisioned in a potential START III agreement.¹⁷ Putin, however, did not wish to see the United States abandon the START arms control framework. During the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) conference in Shanghai in October 2001, he told Bush that he wanted the reductions formalized in a treaty. Bush eventually agreed.¹⁸

¹⁵ Михеев В. Треугольник Россия — США — Китай после 11 сентября // Проблемы Дальнего Востока. 2002 г. — № 1. — С. 24 [Vassily Mikheev, "The Russia-United States-China Triangle after September 11," *Problemy Dal'nego Vostoka* 2002 (1): 24].

¹⁶ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 323.

¹⁷ Ларин А.Г. «Большой треугольник» Россия-США-Китай и иракский кризис // Китай в диалоге цивилизации: к 70-летию академика М.Л. Титаренко / гл. ред. С.Л. Тихвинский. М., 2004. С. 379 [Alexander Larin, "The Russia-USA-China 'Big Triangle' and the Iraq Crisis," in *China in the Dialogue of Civilizations: A Collection Dedicated to the 70th Birthday of Academic M.L. Titarenko*, ed. S.L. Tikhvinskii, ed. (Moscow: Institute of the Far East, 2004), 379].

¹⁸ Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 73.

The resulting treaty, which was only three pages long, drew criticism from many arms control experts. It obligated the two countries to remove the warheads from missiles, but not to destroy them. Either side could simply store the excess warheads. The treaty also lacked the robust verification mechanisms that had been present in the START treaties.¹⁹ In the view of many critics, the treaty left the impression that the United States had devalued strategic arms control and signed the treaty merely as a gesture to satisfy Russia. Some Russian critics argued that Putin, by unilaterally announcing cuts to the level of 1,500 warheads, had removed any incentive for the United States to negotiate with Russia on arms control.²⁰ China, which possessed a much smaller nuclear arsenal than either the United States or Russia, was not part of the arms control talks. Chinese leaders perceived an interest, however, in the continuation of U.S.-Russia arms reductions.

Bush and Putin also worked to forge a new relationship between NATO and Russia. Bush had already made clear, during a speech in Warsaw in June 2001, that he intended to pursue a second round of NATO expansion that was likely to include the three Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.²¹ During that same summer, Putin suggested that Russia join NATO. Some current and former U.S. officials supported the idea, arguing that membership in the alliance could transform Russia into a partner rather than a dissatisfied revisionist state. However, the Bush administration did not pursue the idea. Russia's future was still too uncertain, and many current and prospective NATO members continued to view Russia as a potential security threat. In addition, accepting Russia as a NATO member would have pushed the alliance's boundary all the way to China's border, a development with major ramifications for international security.²² As

¹⁹ Ibid, 74; Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 323.

²⁰ Лукин А. Россия, США, Китай и война в Ираке // Международная Жизнь. 2003 г. — № 4. — С. 100 [Alexander Lukin, "Russia, the USA, and China and the War in Iraq," *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn* 2003 (4): 100].

²¹ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 323.

²² Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 75-76.

they had during the early 1990s, Chinese leaders worried that Russian membership in NATO, or at least a close strategic accommodation between the alliance and Russia, would leave China isolated internationally. These concerns increased following the September 11 terrorist attacks, when Putin leaned strongly toward the West.²³

Although the Bush administration opposed Russia's bid for NATO membership, it still sought to improve relations between the alliance and Russia. The administration sought, in particular, to replace the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council (PJC), which was established in 1997. The council had failed to function effectively during the Kosovo War and had generally failed to promote cooperation between the alliance and Russia. During the Rome summit of NATO heads of state in May 2002, which immediately followed Bush's visit to Moscow, the alliance and Russia formed the NATO-Russia Council (NRC). Under the PJC's "19 + 1" format, NATO's 19 member states had first reached decisions among themselves, then consulted with Russia. By contrast, the NRC would work in a format of 20, in which Russia would have the right to offer its advice before the member states made their decisions. Putin expressed his approval of the new arrangement.²⁴

During this same NATO summit, the alliance decided to admit seven new members in 2004. In addition to Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia, the alliance would admit the Baltic states. This round of expansion was especially sensitive for Russia because the Baltics had constituted three of the Soviet Union's fifteen republics, though the United States had never officially recognized their incorporation into the Soviet state. Poland's accession to NATO had already brought the alliance's territory into contact with the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad on the Baltic

²³ Михеев. Треугольник Россия — США — Китай после 11 сентября. С. 24 [Mikheev, "The Russia-United States-China Triangle after September 11," 24].

²⁴ Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 75-76; Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 323-324.

Sea, and now the alliance would border the Russian heartland. In the words of Yevgeny Primakov, the former Russian foreign minister and prime minister, “Russia remains staunchly opposed to NATO expansion, since it brings a military alliance right up to our borders for no real purpose.”²⁵ Nevertheless, Putin’s response to the second round of NATO expansion, like his reaction to the U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty, was restrained.²⁶

On missile defense, NATO expansion, and other issues, Putin sought to break from the pattern typical of the Yeltsin years. Yeltsin would fulminate against a U.S. foreign policy decision that he opposed before inevitably backing down and accepting it.²⁷ According to one theoretically based interpretation of Russian foreign policy during the period following the 2001 terrorist attacks, Putin and some of Russia’s leading national security strategists realized that the policy of multipolarity and opposition to U.S. foreign policy that Russia pursued during the preceding years had failed. During the Yeltsin era, Russia repeatedly put its credibility on the line by clearly stating its opposition to U.S. positions, but consistently failed to alter U.S. foreign policy. When Russia was forced to back down, often in humiliating fashion, it appeared weak. Putin knew that Russia eventually would be forced to compromise on issues such as U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty and NATO expansion in any case. With Russia still in a relatively weak position, the September 11 terrorist attacks offered Putin an opportunity to make these compromises as part of an overall strategy of bandwagoning with the United States.²⁸

Putin’s tilt toward the United States during this period, however, raised concerns in China. By abandoning Russia’s policy of the late Yeltsin years, when Russia strongly opposed the United

²⁵ Примаков Е. Годы в Большой Политике. М.: Совершенно Секретно, 1999. С. 64 [Yevgeny Primakov, *Years in Big Politics* (Moscow: Sovershennno Sekretno, 1999), 64]. Quoted in Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 77.

²⁶ Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 78.

²⁷ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 323.

²⁸ William C. Wohlforth, “Revisiting Balance of Power Theory in Central Eurasia,” in *Balance of Power: Theory and Practice in the 21st Century*, ed. T.V. Paul et al. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 223-224.

States on withdrawal from the ABM Treaty and NATO expansion, Russia had, in the view of some Chinese critics, struck a blow to the China-Russia relationship and called into doubt whether this relationship would fulfill the promise of the Treaty of Good-Neighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation.²⁹ China would have preferred that Russia pressure the United States to abandon its planned deployment of missile defense, or at least limit the extent of such systems, and decline to expand NATO further. Above all, Chinese leaders wanted Russia to coordinate its positions more closely with their country. Ideally, the two countries would maintain a united front.³⁰

Russia's decision to allow the United States to establish military bases in Central Asia also complicated China's security situation.³¹ Chinese leaders, recognizing the benefits that would result from successful U.S. efforts to topple the Taliban and stabilize Afghanistan, did not seek to block the establishment of U.S. military bases in this region. Nevertheless, they harbored concerns about this deployment. Chinese leaders feared that a U.S. military presence in close proximity to China's volatile provinces of Xinjiang and Tibet, deployed under the pretext of fighting the war on terrorism, eventually could become part of a strategy to encircle China and threaten its western frontier.³²

The pro-Western shift in Russia's foreign policy caused some bewilderment for Chinese strategists, who were concerned about the stability and predictability of Russia's diplomacy. Although Russia did not abandon its desire to improve relations with China, its tilt toward the West

²⁹ 万成才：《新俄罗斯观察》北京，新华出版社，2010年，第262页[Wan Chengcai, *A New Survey of Russia* (Beijing: Xinhua Chubanshe, 2010), 262]. Цит. по: Лукин А.В. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 336 [Cited in Lukin, "From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 336].

³⁰ Лукин. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 336 [Lukin, "From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 336].

³¹ 万成才：《新俄罗斯观察》，第262页[Wan Chengcai, *A New Survey of Russia*, 262]. Цит. по: Лукин А.В. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 336 [Cited in Lukin, "From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 336].

³² Лукин. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 334-335 [Lukin, "From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 334-335].

nevertheless caused some cooling in relations with China during this period. Sympathetic Chinese analysts argued that Russia's rapprochement with the West was not anti-China in character. Rather, at a time when China sought closer relations with Russia, Putin simply aimed to achieve equilibrium in relations with the United States and China.³³ Nevertheless, Russian critics argued that Putin made concessions to the West too hurriedly and without adequate consultation with Chinese leaders. Although the Chinese government refrained from saying so publicly, Putin's decisions caused some concern in China that Russia was returning to the pro-Western foreign policy of the Kozyrev years. In this case, China would find itself in the undesirable situation of facing the United States one-on-one, isolated in the international system. In time, China also came to believe that Russia received little or nothing in return for its unilateral concessions to the United States.³⁴

The May 2002 summit in Moscow proved to be the high point of the U.S.-Russia rapprochement following the September 11 attacks. In 2002 and early 2003, as the United States prepared to wage war against Iraq, cracks in the new U.S.-Russia partnership began to appear. This, in turn, encouraged Russia once again to pursue diplomatic outreach to China.

The Iraq War

During his State of the Union Address in January 2002, at the height of the post-September 11 U.S.-Russia rapprochement, Bush labeled Iraq, Iran, and North Korea an "axis of evil."

³³ 赵华胜：《中俄关系：地位，模式，趋势》，《国际政治与国际关系》，2004年，第5期，第43页 [Zhao Huasheng, "China-Russia Relations: Place, Model, Trends," *Guoji Zhengzhi Yu Guoji Guanxi* 2004 (5): 43].

³⁴ Титаренко М.Л. Геополитическое значение Дальнего Востока. Россия, Китай и другие страны Азии. Москва. Памятники исторической мысли. 2008. С. 38, 279 [M.L. Titarenko, *The Geopolitical Meaning of the Far East: Russia, China, and Other Countries of Asia* (Moscow: Pamyatniki Istoricheskoi Mysli, 2008), 38, 279]; Лукин. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 335 [Lukin, "From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 335]; Лукин. Россия, США, Китай и война в Ираке. С. 105 [Alexander Lukin, "Russia, the USA, and China and the War in Iraq," 105].

Although the U.S. and Russian positions on the struggle against Al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations were aligned, the two countries disagreed on how to approach these countries. The Bush administration, like its predecessor, was annoyed by Russia's continuing relationships with what it considered "rogue states." Russia insisted that it was pursuing legitimate political and economic interests in its bilateral relations with each. It therefore resented U.S. efforts to stop Russia from doing business with them.³⁵ Russia was also uncomfortable with the new National Security Strategy of the United States, published in September 2002, which claimed the right to engage in preventive war and called for the United States to maintain its dominant position in the international system.³⁶ These differing views came to the forefront over the next year as the Bush administration built the case for war against Iraq.

Bush decided to take his case to the United Nations initially. On September 12, 2002, he addressed the UN General Assembly, where he called for an intensified international effort to confront Saddam Hussein's regime over its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs. Hussein had evicted UN weapons inspectors following the December 1998 bombing of Iraq, which President Bill Clinton had ordered. On November 8, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1441, which demanded that Iraq allow the weapons inspectors to return and threatened "serious consequences" if Iraq failed to cooperate. Russia and China voted for the resolution, which passed 15-0.³⁷

Following the adoption of Resolution 1441, the Bush administration sought to build support for military action against Iraq among U.S. allies in Europe, as well as from Russia. Instead,

³⁵ Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 83-84.

³⁶ Лукин. Россия, США, Китай и война в Ираке. С. 102 [Lukin, "Russia, the USA, and China and the War in Iraq," 102]. For the new U.S. strategy, see *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/63562.pdf>.

³⁷ Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 88-89; Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 316.

the United States quickly encountered opposition. German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, who had criticized the Bush administration's contemplated invasion of Iraq during his successful 2002 re-election campaign, announced that he would not support military action. Germany filled a rotating seat on the Security Council starting in January 2003. France, by contrast, was a permanent member and therefore had the authority to veto Security Council authorization of military action. French President Jacques Chirac also announced that he would oppose war against Iraq. France and Germany then competed with the United States for support from Putin, who was considering his options.³⁸

One possibility was for Russia to support the U.S. war in Iraq. The Bush administration decided in February 2003 to seek an additional UN Security Council resolution that would authorize military action against Iraq. This would have required Russia's support, or at least its agreement not to veto the resolution. Despite Putin's desire to strengthen relations with the United States, the option to support the war was unappealing for Russia in many ways. Russia's support would have encouraged the use of U.S. military force, which Russia had an overall interest in restraining. The war in Iraq might have strengthened U.S. positions in the Middle East at Russia's expense. It also threatened to strain Russia's relations with the Muslim world and to produce negative consequences for Russia's volatile and largely Muslim North Caucasus. On the other hand, opposing the United States would threaten the U.S.-Russia rapprochement and force a test of Russia's relations with the most powerful country in the world.³⁹

On February 5, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell addressed the Security Council, urging members to support military action against Iraq to halt its alleged chemical, biological, and nuclear

³⁸ Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 89-90.

³⁹ Ларин. «Большой треугольник» Россия-США-Китай и иракский кризис. С. 379 [Larin, "The Russia-USA-China 'Big Triangle' and the Iraq Crisis," 379].

weapons programs. Immediately following Powell's speech, Putin flew to Berlin and Paris for meetings with Schroeder and Chirac, respectively. The German and French leaders made concerted efforts to gain Russia's support.⁴⁰ Putin therefore confronted a second option, namely to join France and Germany in publicly opposing the war. This approach offered diplomatic cover from major Western countries, allowing Russia to avoid diplomatic isolation should it choose to oppose the war. It also carried the promise of improved relations with Europe, a crucial economic partner for Russia.⁴¹

A final possibility for Russia was to follow China's example. China's approach was to withhold support for war, but to act quietly, rather than waging a public diplomatic campaign to oppose military action against Iraq.⁴² On Iraq, as on other issues that did not directly affect its vital interests, China followed Deng Xiaoping's admonition to "remain in the shadows" and "strive not to put oneself forward in any way." China opposed the war publicly, but it did not strive to "play first violin in the anti-war orchestra."⁴³ Initially, China was concerned that Russia would support the war. If Putin had done so, this would have signaled that relations with the United States, not China, were Russia's priority. In this case, Chinese leaders feared, Russia's policies toward China would henceforth be heavily influenced by U.S. desires.⁴⁴

China's initial concerns that Russia might support the war proved unfounded, however. Russia's stance ultimately proved to be convergent with that of China. On February 19, Putin

⁴⁰ Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 90.

⁴¹ Лукин. Россия, США, Китай и война в Ираке. С. 104 [Lukin, "Russia, the USA, and China and the War in Iraq," 104].

⁴² Peter Baker and Susan Glasser, *Kremlin Rising: Vladimir Putin's Russia and the End of Revolution* (New York: Scribner, 2005), 224-225. Cited in Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 90.

⁴³ Кулик Б.Т. Фактор США в российско-китайских отношениях // Российско-китайские отношения: состояние, перспективы. М., 2005. С. 137 n22 [Boris Kulik, "The U.S. Factor in Russia-China Relations," in *Russia-China Relations: Condition, Prospects* (Moscow: Institute of the Far East, 2005), 137 n22].

⁴⁴ Ларин. «Большой треугольник» Россия-США-Китай и иракский кризис. С. 379 [Larin, "The Russia-USA-China 'Big Triangle' and the Iraq Crisis," 379].

spoke with Jiang Zemin by telephone to coordinate the two countries' positions. The two leaders agreed that UN weapons inspectors should be allowed to continue their work to ensure Iraq's compliance with Resolution 1441. They urged a peaceful solution to the crisis.⁴⁵ Russia and China reiterated these principles during Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov's visit to Beijing on February 27.⁴⁶ Notably, however, this visit also revealed a difference in the two countries' views. Ivanov announced that Russia would, if the interests of international stability demanded it, veto a new Security Council resolution authorizing war in Iraq. China declined to join Russia in this proclamation, leaving open the possibility that it might abstain from such a resolution rather than exercise its veto power.⁴⁷ It remained to be seen whether Russia would ultimately adopt China's low-key diplomatic approach or express more outspoken opposition to the war.

The United States expended most of its diplomatic efforts trying to win support from allies in Europe, but it also courted Russia. The Bush administration sent no high-level official to Moscow to make its case to the Russians. However, during February it offered several inducements to Russia, including assurances about the \$8 billion in debt that Iraq owed Russia, a pledge that Russian companies would be allowed to participate in Iraq's postwar reconstruction, and a vow to repeal the Jackson-Vanik amendment, legislation dating to 1974 that had made Russia's most-favored nation trading status contingent on its policies on Jewish emigration.⁴⁸ In the end, Putin declined these offers, declaring that Russia would not bargain its foreign policy position in return

⁴⁵ О телефонном разговоре Президента России В.В. Путина с Председателем КНР Цзян Цзэминем. 19.2.2002 [On the telephone conversation of Russian President Putin with PRC Chairman Jiang Zemin, February 19, 2002]. Цит. по: Лукин. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 339-340 [Cited in Lukin, "From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 339-340].

⁴⁶ Лукин. Россия, США, Китай и война в Ираке. С. 107 [Lukin, "Russia, the USA, and China and the War in Iraq," 107].

⁴⁷ Ларин. «Большой треугольник» Россия-США-Китай и иракский кризис. С. 379 [Larin, "The Russia-USA-China 'Big Triangle' and the Iraq Crisis," 379].

⁴⁸ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 327.

for economic favors, “as in an oriental market.”⁴⁹ Primakov, who visited Iraq that same month, failed to convince Hussein to comply with the UN resolution and avoid a war that he was sure to lose.⁵⁰

In the end, France and Germany succeeded in winning Russia’s support. Putin ultimately decided to take a strong diplomatic stand against the war, joining forces with these leading European powers. On March 5, 2003, Chirac and Schroeder appeared at a press conference with Putin to announce that all three countries would oppose a new Security Council resolution authorizing military force against Iraq. The three leaders called for UN weapons inspectors to receive additional time to continue their work. Thus, Russia was able to express its public opposition to the war in concert with leading Western powers who also opposed the U.S. position, rather than being forced to turn away from the West.⁵¹ The United States, realizing that its attempt to obtain a new resolution was futile, abandoned these efforts and initiated the war on March 20. That same day, Putin sharply criticized the U.S. decision for war. The invasion of Iraq would undermine the principle of state sovereignty, making all states feel insecure, he argued. He also said that international law should not be replaced by the “law of the fist.”⁵² Putin repeatedly warned of the dangers of unilateral action and called the war a mistake.⁵³

Putin’s rhetoric echoed many of the complaints about U.S. foreign policy that Russia and China had made in numerous joint statements over the preceding years. Strikingly, however, in becoming part of the most vocal diplomatic bloc opposing the war in Iraq, Russia joined forces

⁴⁹ Ibid, 327.

⁵⁰ Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 91.

⁵¹ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 327.

⁵² Лукин. Россия, США, Китай и война в Ираке. С. 114 [Lukin, “Russia, the USA, and China and the War in Iraq,” 114]; Кулик Б.Т. Фактор США в российско-китайских отношениях. С. 138 [Kulik, “The U.S. Factor in Russia-China Relations,” 138].

⁵³ Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 327.

not with its strategic partner, China, but with two major U.S. allies in Europe, France and Germany.⁵⁴ To be sure, Russia and China differed not in their views on the war, but in their diplomatic tactics. During a telephone call on March 18, two days before the war began, Putin and newly elected PRC Chairman Hu Jintao agreed on their common approaches to the impending war.⁵⁵

China, however, was more restrained than Russia in its opposition. Several factors help to explain this difference. China's overall foreign policy strategy was to maintain an amicable international environment, with a special focus on good relations with the United States, in order to pursue domestic modernization and economic growth. It therefore sought to insulate the U.S.-China relationship from shocks by moderating its criticism of the United States for confronting third countries, such as Iraq, in which China had no vital national interests at stake.⁵⁶ This was essentially the policy that China followed at the beginning of the Kosovo War. Only after the bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade did China become more outspoken in its opposition.

In the view of Chinese leaders, serious confrontations with the United States were not only unwelcome, but also unnecessary, given the favorable international environment that China faced at the beginning of the twenty-first century. During his report to the 16th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party of China in November 2002, outgoing Chinese leader Jiang Zemin declared that the first two decades of the twenty-first century would be a "period of strategic opportunities."⁵⁷ Yang Jiechi, who would later serve as China's foreign minister, wrote that China,

⁵⁴ 赵华胜：《中俄关系：地位，模式，趋势》，第43页 [Zhao Huasheng, "China-Russia Relations: Place, Model, Trends," 43].

⁵⁵ Лукин. Россия, США, Китай и война в Ираке. С. 107 [Lukin, "Russia, the USA, and China and the War in Iraq," 107].

⁵⁶ Ларин. «Большой треугольник» Россия-США-Китай и иракский кризис. С. 379 [Larin, "The Russia-USA-China 'Big Triangle' and the Iraq Crisis," 379].

⁵⁷ Full Text of Jiang Zemin's Report at 16th Party Congress (I), Nov. 8, 2002, http://en.people.cn/200211/18/eng20021118_106983.shtml.

during this period, was “not the focus of world contradictions” and therefore able to “concentrate its forces on modernization, gradually develop itself, and become stronger on a peaceful path.”⁵⁸ Another prominent Chinese scholar wrote that China’s best means of creating a counterweight to the United States was not to confront the United States directly or struggle against it, but to defend international norms on a multilateral foundation.⁵⁹

When encouraging multilateral resistance to U.S. policies, China often had the luxury of allowing Russia to take the lead. In this way, Russia would bear the brunt of U.S. pressure. In the run-up to the war in Iraq, not for the last time, China followed this approach. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia’s permanent seat in the UN Security Council was one of the few remaining attributes of great-power status that the country continued to possess. Therefore, Russia had an especially strong stake in maintaining the UN’s decisive role.⁶⁰ After the U.S. invasion of Iraq, Chinese strategists remained uncertain whether Russia would have taken a strong public stand against the war had France and Germany not done so first. Russia maintained closer diplomatic ties with France and Germany than did China. This factor helps to explain why China, while supporting the position of France, Germany, and Russia, refrained from joining their forceful public denunciation of the war.⁶¹

⁵⁸ 杨洁勉：《美伊战争对世界体系和国际秩序的影响》，《现代国际关系》，2003年，第4期，第6页 [Yang Jiechi, “The Influence of the U.S.-Iraq War on the World System and the International Order,” *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* 2003 (4): 6]. Цит. по: Ларин А.Г. «Большой треугольник» Россия-США-Китай и иракский кризис. С. 380, 385n9 [Larin, “The Russia-USA-China ‘Big Triangle’ and the Iraq Crisis,” 380, 385n9].

⁵⁹ 朱锋：《理性面对挑战和冲突》，《现代国际关系》，2003年，第4期，第11页 [Zhu Feng, “Facing Challenges and Conflicts Rationally,” *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* 2003 (4): 11]. Цит. по: Ларин А.Г. «Большой треугольник» Россия-США-Китай и иракский кризис. С. 384, 385 n14 [Larin, “The Russia-USA-China ‘Big Triangle’ and the Iraq Crisis,” 384, 385 n14].

⁶⁰ Лукин. Россия, США, Китай и война в Ираке. С. 100 [Lukin, “Russia, the USA, and China and the War in Iraq,” 100].

⁶¹ 邢广程：《由中俄美关系变化的思考》，第17页 [Xing Guangcheng, “Reflections Occasioned by Changes in China-Russia-U.S. Relations,” 17].

Despite their disagreement over the war in Iraq, the United States and Russia sought, following the toppling of Saddam Hussein's regime, to regain the positive momentum in the relationship that had existed prior to the war.⁶² Despite its earlier concerns about the impact that opposition to the war would have on relations with the United States, Russia paid no heavy price for its position. The Bush administration took an understanding view toward Russia. National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice's position, which leaked to the media, was succinct: "Punish France, ignore Germany, forgive Russia." Bush visited St. Petersburg in late May to attend the celebrations of the city's three hundredth anniversary. "We will show the world that friends can disagree, move beyond disagreement, and work in a very constructive way to maintain peace," Bush said. The Russian Duma ratified the SORT Treaty, an act that it had previously delayed as a sign of opposition to the war in Iraq.⁶³ The war strained U.S.-Russia relations but did not cause them to rupture.

In the view of Chinese analysts, the war in Iraq caused some loosening, though no fundamental change, in the China-Russia strategic partnership.⁶⁴ This trend continued following the toppling of Hussein's regime, when Russia appeared to take a more cooperative approach than did China toward Iraq's postwar reconstruction.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, Russia and China both welcomed the U.S. willingness to assign responsibility for postwar reconstruction to the United Nations.⁶⁶ In the view of some Chinese analysts, Russia lost much and gained little from its post-September 11 rapprochement with the United States. In this view, in return for Russia's accommodation of U.S.

⁶² Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, 329.

⁶³ Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 95-96.

⁶⁴ See for example 赵华胜:《中俄关系:地位,模式,趋势》,第43页 [Zhao Huasheng, "China-Russia Relations: Place, Model, Trends," 43].

⁶⁵ 吴大辉:《中俄战略协作伙伴关系:十年实践的历史考察》,第6页 [Wu Dahui, "China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations: Historical Observations on Ten Years of Practice," 6].

⁶⁶ Ларин. «Большой треугольник» Россия-США-Китай и иракский кризис. С. 380 [Larin, "The Russia-USA-China 'Big Triangle' and the Iraq Crisis," 380].

positions on missile defense and NATO expansion, the United States ignored Russia's objections to the war in Iraq and continued to squeeze Russia's strategic space through NATO expansion. As a result, Russia realized that it needed to improve its relations with China to improve its bargaining leverage with the United States.⁶⁷ However, a significant improvement of U.S.-China relations during this period limited the scope for China-Russia cooperation at the global level.

U.S.-China relations improve

Around the turn of the twenty-first century, a series of events and trends produced tension in U.S.-China relations. These included the bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade in 1999, the growing power of pro-independence forces in Taiwan, and the EP-3 incident in April 2001. President George W. Bush, who had called China a "strategic competitor" during his presidential campaign, initially took a tougher line toward China than had the Clinton administration, especially during the second Clinton term. Bush increased U.S. support for Taiwan and made relations with U.S. allies in Asia a higher priority than relations with China.⁶⁸ Following the September 11 terrorist attacks, China supported the U.S.-led war on terrorism but worried about a potential long-term U.S. presence in Central Asia, the region that abutted China's western frontier. Despite these tensions that arose during this turbulent period, U.S.-China relations improved considerably during the first half of the decade. Both countries took steps that helped make this possible.

⁶⁷ 万成才：《新俄罗斯观察》，第 263 页 [Wan Chengcai, *A New Survey of Russia*, 263]. Цит. по: Цит. по: Лукин. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 340 fn97 [Cited in Lukin, "From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 340 fn97].

⁶⁸ Robert G. Sutter, *Chinese Foreign Relations: Power and Policy Since the Cold War*, Third Ed. (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), 144.

By the middle of 2001, Chinese leaders concluded that it would be in their interest to improve relations with the United States. Despite confidence in their own country's long-term prospects, they calculated that the United States was likely to remain the most powerful country in the world for a significant period to come. Under these circumstances, China should seek to avoid any further deterioration of the relationship. Chinese officials therefore sought to achieve common ground and to downplay differences with the United States whenever possible. Both the Chinese government and state media softened their criticism of the United States.⁶⁹ The United States took some limited steps to reciprocate, most importantly by supporting China's accession to the World Trade Organization in December 2001. By the time of the 16th Party Congress in September 2002, having reflected upon the conclusions of the debate on peace and development in 1999 in the light of subsequent events, Chinese leaders reaffirmed their strategy of lying low, avoiding direct confrontation with the United States, and exploiting their country's twenty-year window of strategic opportunity.⁷⁰

China also continued to pursue the foreign policy strategy, stressing multilateralism and reassurance of other countries, that it had embraced in 1996.⁷¹ During the early years of the new century, China continued to expand its ties with ASEAN, a process that had begun during the second half of the 1990s. In 2002, following four years of negotiations, China signed a declaration with ASEAN on a code of conduct for the management of offshore territorial disputes in the South China Sea. China made compromises to achieve this result, as the code of conduct largely adopted the ASEAN countries' position on these issues.⁷² In addition to its embrace of limited

⁶⁹ Ibid, 145.

⁷⁰ Gilbert Rozman, *Chinese Strategic Thought Toward Asia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 110-111.

⁷¹ 唐世平, 张蕴岭: 《中国的地区战略》, 《世界经济与政治》, 2004 年第 6 期 [Tang Shiping and Zhang Yunling, "China's Regional Strategy," *Shijie Jingji Yu Zhenzhi* 2004 (6)].

⁷² Evan S. Medeiros and M. Taylor Fravel, "China's New Diplomacy," *Foreign Affairs* 82, no. 6 (2003): 26.

multilateralism, China also grew increasingly aware of ways that it could use its growing economic might to increase its influence among countries in the Asia-Pacific region.⁷³

Beginning around 2003, the Bush administration began to increase its focus on positive engagement of China. The difficulties that the United States faced in Iraq and in the war on terrorism, among other issues, may have contributed to the shift. The administration continued to be concerned about the long-term implications of China's rise as a competitor to the United States, but U.S. officials hoped that engagement with China would channel its future behavior in constructive directions.

Likewise, China continued to worry about U.S. pressure and possible attempts at encirclement, but nevertheless welcomed the increase in U.S. engagement. Chinese leaders believed that this policy served China's interests in fostering a tranquil international environment during China's period of "strategic opportunity."⁷⁴ According to one analysis by a leading Chinese foreign policy thinker, China opposed "hegemonic behavior" by the United States but could accept the fact of U.S. hegemony.⁷⁵ In the view of one leading U.S. analyst, China's foreign policy during this period demonstrated that it was a status quo power.⁷⁶ However, Chinese strategists calculated that the difficulties facing the United States in foreign policy would cause U.S. soft power to decline, giving China additional room to maneuver. Even as they stressed the pursuit of common interests, Chinese leaders focused on the need to resist U.S. claims to unquestioned leadership in the realms of both power and values.⁷⁷

⁷³ Rozman, *Chinese Strategic Thought Toward Asia*, 121.

⁷⁴ Sutter, *Chinese Foreign Relations*, 146.

⁷⁵ 王缉思:《美国霸权的逻辑》,《美国研究》,2003年第3期,第7-30页[Wang Jisi, "The Logic of American Hegemony," *Meiguo Yanjiu* 2003 (3): 7-30].

⁷⁶ Alastair Iain Johnston, "Is China a Status Quo Power?" *International Security* 27, no. 4 (Spring 2003): 5-56.

⁷⁷ Rozman, *Chinese Strategic Thought Toward Asia*, 110.

Cross-strait relations were one area in which the U.S. adjustment was evident. Although it continued to offer Taiwan diplomatic support and arms sales, the Bush administration also took important steps to reassure China that it adhered to the one-China policy. The election in 2000 of Chen Shui-bian, the first president of Taiwan from a pro-independence party, raised the stakes. During a speech that he delivered during the summer of 2002, the Taiwanese president suggested that he viewed Taiwan as an independent country. His characterization of cross-Strait relations as “one country on each side” went well beyond Lee Teng-hui’s formula from three years earlier of “special state-to-state relations.”⁷⁸

The Bush administration rejected Chen’s statements, both during Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage’s visit to Beijing in August 2002 and during the summit between Bush and Jiang Zemin at Bush’s ranch in Crawford, Texas, two months later. With Chen’s provocative statements continuing throughout the run-up to the March 2004 presidential election, Bush took a strong public stand against Chen’s views during a visit to Washington by PRC Premier Wen Jiabao in December 2003. With Wen standing at his side during a press conference in the Rose Garden, Bush reaffirmed that the United States opposed actions by either the PRC or Taiwan to change the status quo unilaterally. He also criticized Chen’s policies and statements. Chinese leaders were pleased with Bush’s words. Chen was re-elected, however, prompting the PRC leadership, through the National People’s Congress, to pass an anti-secession law threatening “nonpeaceful” measures against Taiwan under specified conditions.⁷⁹

During this period, China also began to play a more active role in international efforts to stop North Korea’s development of nuclear weapons. This issue returned to prominence on the international agenda following events at the end of 2002 and the beginning of 2003. In late 2002,

⁷⁸ Christensen, *The China Challenge*, 210-211.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 210-211.

the United States presented evidence that North Korea was seeking to produce highly enriched uranium (HEU) in violation of international agreements. North Korea denied the accusation, withdrew from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, and resumed the reprocessing of spent fuel rods at the Yongbyon nuclear plant for the first time since the 1994 Agreed Framework had frozen this activity.⁸⁰

For the previous decade, China had played a largely passive role on the issue of North Korea's nuclear program.⁸¹ However, the possibility of U.S. air strikes against North Korea, one of the countries that Bush had included in the "Axis of Evil," encouraged China to become more active.⁸² China temporarily cut off oil shipments to North Korea during the winter of 2002-2003. Chinese leaders also suggested that their country's defense commitment to North Korea, sealed in a 1961 treaty, would be conditional on North Korea's international conduct. Beginning in April 2003, China hosted three-party talks in which it participated along with the United States and North Korea. Eventually North Korea agreed to participate in the expanded Six Party Talks, which began in August and included Japan, South Korea, and Russia.⁸³

Russia had called for six-party talks since the mid-1990s. However, because Russia had lost much of its influence in the Asia-Pacific region following the breakup of the Soviet Union, including in Pyongyang, China in recent years had viewed Russia as a peripheral actor on the Korean peninsula. When Japan proposed the Six Party Talks in 2003, Russia supported the idea.

Russia's interests on the Korean peninsula differed in important respects from those of China. For reasons of both security and economics, Russia supported a "soft landing" for North

⁸⁰ Ibid, 222-223.

⁸¹ Medeiros and Fravel, "China's New Diplomacy," 22.

⁸² See Shi Yinhong, "Crisis and Hope—North Korean Nuclear Issue against Backdrop of Iraq War," *Ta Kung Pao*, April 15, 2003, FBI CPP-2003-0421-000045. Cited in Christensen, *The China Challenge*, 223, 346 n22.

⁸³ Christensen, *The China Challenge*, 224.

Korea and the gradual reunification of the peninsula. Russian strategists believed that such an outcome, by making an immense contribution to stability in Northeast Asia, would help to ensure the security of the Russian Far East. It could also stimulate the economy of the Russian Far East, especially if Russia could extend the Trans-Siberian Railway and a regional oil pipeline, which was then still under discussion, through the Korean Peninsula to link up with the dynamic economy of South Korea. As the weakest power in Northeast Asia, Russia sought to achieve balance among the great powers. Russia sought to contain Chinese power in the region, but it also sought to cooperate with China, as well as with Japan and South Korea, to check U.S. regional ambitions.⁸⁴ Nevertheless, Russia's position converged with that of China. In both the run-up and in the talks themselves, Russia primarily coordinated its position with those of China and South Korea. In a series of joint statements, China and Russia stressed their shared commitment to denuclearization of the peninsula through peaceful means.⁸⁵ For example, in a joint statement on May 27, 2003, Putin and Hu Jintao criticized North Korea for its pursuit of nuclear weapons but declared that "scenarios of power pressure or the use of force to resolve the problems existing [in Korea] are unacceptable."⁸⁶

Despite Russia's inclusion in the talks, the United States and China exerted the greatest influence on North Korea. The Six Party Talks yielded a joint statement, issued on September 19, 2005, in which North Korea and the other parties committed to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. The agreement quickly broke down, however, as North Korea tested a long-range missile on July 4, 2006 and a nuclear device in October of that same year. China harshly

⁸⁴ Gilbert Rozman, "The Geopolitics of the Korean Nuclear Crisis," in *Strategic Asia 2003-04: Fragility and Crisis*, ed. Richard J. Ellings, Aaron L. Friedberg, and Michael Wills, eds. (Seattle and Washington, D.C.: The National Bureau of Asian Research, 2003), 254-255.

⁸⁵ Лукин. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 342 [Lukin, "From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 342].

⁸⁶ Quoted in Rozman, "The Geopolitics of the Korean Nuclear Crisis," 255, 259-260.

condemned both tests.⁸⁷ Although the Six Party Talks did not achieve North Korea's denuclearization, they demonstrated that China was more engaged, and from the U.S. perspective more cooperative, than it had been on this issue previously. The bottom line, however, was that China was reluctant to put pressure on North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons and missile programs. Instead, Chinese leaders called for the United States to offer North Korea a security guarantee as a starting point for discussions, and they encouraged the idea that the issue could be resolved through modest compromises.⁸⁸

Along with positive developments, a series of disagreements continued to create tension in U.S.-China relations during this period. For example, the U.S.-Japan "2+2" report, issued in February 2005, proclaimed that the two countries shared an interest in peaceful and stable relations across the Taiwan Strait. The two allies could hardly fail to share an interest in cross-Strait stability, given the island's geographic proximity to Japan and the certainty that the United States would require the use of its military bases in Japan in any potential armed conflict over Taiwan. The Chinese leaders and people, however, recalled Japan's imperial rule over Taiwan and opposed any suggestion that Japan might become directly involved in an armed conflict in the Taiwan Strait.⁸⁹ The United States and Japan issued this report at a time when China-Japan tensions were running high over issues related to World War II history. At times, the hardening of China's position toward Japan served as an important exception to the general pattern of a more reassuring Chinese foreign policy between 1996 and 2008.

Nevertheless, like the Clinton administration that preceded it, the Bush administration gradually embraced the policy of engagement with China. The most prominent expression of this

⁸⁷ Christensen, *The China Challenge*, 225-228.

⁸⁸ Rozman, *Chinese Strategic Thought Toward Asia*, 122.

⁸⁹ Christensen, *The China Challenge*, 211-212.

policy viewpoint came in a speech by Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick in September 2005. Zoellick urged China to become a “responsible stakeholder” in the international system.⁹⁰ This position reflected the view that China’s cooperation was desirable, and increasingly necessary, in addressing a series of important international issues. It also reflected the belief that China’s acceptance of the international order, rather than its attempt to undermine or drastically reshape it, would serve both U.S. interests and the goal of international stability.⁹¹ The 2006 National Security Strategy of the United States reflected Zoellick’s arguments.⁹²

The commitment by both the United States and China to improve relations during this period, despite ongoing areas of tension, achieved notable results. One byproduct was that China-Russia cooperation at the global level to resist the United States became a less pressing concern during this period than it had been between 1999 and 2001. China and Russia also achieved mixed results during this period at the bilateral level. Together, these factors combined to shift the focus of China-Russia cooperation onto the regional level, especially in Central Asia.⁹³

⁹⁰ Remarks of Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick, “Whither China? From Membership to Responsibility,” New York, National Committee on U.S.-China Relations, September 21, 2005, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/s/d/former/zoellick/rem/53682.htm>.

⁹¹ Sutter, *Chinese Foreign Relations*, 148.

⁹² *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, March 2006, 40-42.

⁹³ 吴大辉：《中俄战略协作伙伴关系：十年实践的历史考察》，第 7-8 页 [Wu Dahui, “China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations: Historical Observations on Ten Years of Practice,” 7-8].

Mixed results in China-Russia bilateral relations

Between 2001 and 2005, China and Russia achieved important successes, but also suffered frustrating setbacks, in their bilateral relations. In 2004, the two countries signed an agreement on the eastern section of their border. This agreement almost completely resolved the border issue, leaving only a few minor details to be settled four years later.⁹⁴ Putin and the Russian leadership believed that settling the border dispute before the balance of power shifted further in China's favor was the prudent course.⁹⁵ Russian arms sales to China also reached new heights during this period, though the technological level of the weapons that China purchased increased only slightly compared to that of the 1990s. Important purchases included multipurpose Su-30MKK fighters, Sovremenny destroyers, and the S-300PMU-2 air defense system.⁹⁶

A number of setbacks, however, demonstrated lingering mistrust in the bilateral relationship. In 2004, against China's objections, Russia granted a visa to the Dalai Lama to visit Buddhists in the Russian province of Kalmykia.⁹⁷ The most important setbacks to China-Russia relations at the bilateral level occurred in the energy sphere. These included the failed attempt by Chinese energy companies to acquire equity stakes in Russian energy companies, as well as China's frustrations in securing Russia's commitment to build an oil pipeline to China.

China's dependence on imported oil grew steadily after 1993, when the country became a net oil importer. To protect its energy security, it sought to diversify its sources of supply.

⁹⁴ 杨闯, 高飞, 冯玉军著: 《百年中俄关系》, 北京: 世界知识出版社, 2006年版, 第430-431页 [Yang Chuang, Gao Fei, Feng Yujun, eds., *One Hundred Years of China-Russia Relations* (Beijing: Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 2006), 430-431].

⁹⁵ Dmitri Trenin, *Post-Imperium: A Eurasian Story* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2011), 43.

⁹⁶ Барабанов М., Кашин В., Макиенко К. Оборонная Промышленность и Торговля Вооружениями КНР. М.: РИСИ. 2013. С. 155 [Mikhail Barabanov, Vasily Kashin, Konstantin Makienko, *The Defense Industry and Arms Trade of the PRC* (Moscow: Russia Institute for Strategic Studies, 2013, 155)].

⁹⁷ 吴大辉: 《中俄战略协作伙伴关系: 十年实践的历史考察》, 第5页 [Wu Dahui, "China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations: Historical Observations on Ten Years of Practice," 5].

Following the 2001 terrorist attacks, China aimed to reduce its dependence on Middle Eastern oil supplies. As one means of diversifying supply, China sought to import oil and gas from Russia, eventually through newly constructed pipelines. China also expressed interest in acquiring equity assets in Russia's upstream production. During the 1990s, when it enjoyed low oil prices, China showed little interest in securing upstream assets in Russia.⁹⁸ By the early 2000s, its interest had grown. An opportunity seemed to present itself in 2002 when Russia, under pressure to repay its heavy sovereign debt, decided to sell Slavneft, a state-owned company that possessed modest oil reserves, mostly in West Siberia, but had suffered from mismanagement.

At the invitation of the Kremlin, the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) prepared a bid for the upcoming December 2002 auction. Initially, CNPC was optimistic about its chances because no Western companies were bidding and CNPC had greater financial resources than its two leading Russian competitors, Tyumen Oil Corporation (TNK) and Sibneft. CNPC's bid reportedly enjoyed the support of Putin, who wanted to prevent Slavneft from falling under the control of Sibneft and its owner, Roman Abramovich, a wealthy oligarch loyal to the Yelstin-era "family," which was in competition with Putin's St. Petersburg faction.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, CNPC's attempt to purchase Slavneft drew intense nationalistic opposition in Russia.¹⁰⁰ The Duma overwhelmingly passed a bill preventing any foreign company with more than 25 percent state ownership from participating in the privatization of Russian enterprises.¹⁰¹ CNPC withdrew its offer. Sibneft and TNK bought Slavneft for \$1.86 billion, much less than the \$3 billion that CNPC

⁹⁸ Erica S. Downs, "Sino-Russian Energy Relations: An Uncertain Courtship," in *The Future of China-Russia Relations*, ed. James Bellacqua (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2009), 154.

⁹⁹ Bo Kong, *China's International Petroleum Policy* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO), 104.

¹⁰⁰ Stephen Blank, *Russo-Chinese Energy Relations: Politics in Command* (London: Global Market Briefings, 2006), 6.

¹⁰¹ Keun-Wook Paik, *Sino-Russian Oil and Gas Cooperation: The Reality and Implications* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 367-368.

was reportedly prepared to pay for a 74.59 percent stake.¹⁰² Later, in the summer of 2003, CNPC won a bid for the Stimul oil company, but Gazprom, a state-run gas company, mounted a legal challenge to the takeover and succeeded in pressuring CNPC to pull out of this deal.¹⁰³ Both bids ultimately failed largely because of Russian concerns about the national security implications of a Chinese state-owned energy company controlling Russia's strategic energy assets.¹⁰⁴

China's efforts to secure the construction of an oil pipeline from Russia initially encountered several years of frustration as well. Russia raised the possibility of an oil pipeline to China as early as 1994.¹⁰⁵ However, oil prices were low during the 1990s, emboldening China to take a hard line in price negotiations with Russia while remaining reluctant to commit to the construction of costly infrastructure.¹⁰⁶ As the twentieth century came to an end, however, world energy prices rose, due in part to China's own increased energy demand, causing China to become increasingly concerned about its energy security and to sharpen its interest in oil and gas pipelines from Russia.¹⁰⁷ In 1999, Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov and Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji agreed that the two countries would conduct an initial feasibility study for an oil pipeline that would extend from Angarsk in Siberia to Daqing in northeastern China.¹⁰⁸ In July 2001, the two countries signed an agreement to build the oil pipeline from Angarsk to Daqing.¹⁰⁹ The

¹⁰² Bo Kong, *China's International Petroleum Policy* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO), 105-107; Downs, "Sino-Russian Energy Relations," 162; Keun-Wook Paik, *Sino-Russian Oil and Gas Cooperation*, 367-368.

¹⁰³ Bo Kong, *China's International Petroleum Policy*, 107-108; Keun-Wook Paik, *Sino-Russian Oil and Gas Cooperation*, 367-368.

¹⁰⁴ Bo Kong, *China's International Petroleum Policy*, 115.

¹⁰⁵ 吴景峰, 《中俄能源合作的战略性分析》, 学术交流, 2008年11月, 总第176期, 第11期, 第95-96页 [Wu Jingfeng, "A Strategic Analysis of China-Russia Energy Cooperation," *Xueshu Jiaoliu* (November 2008): 95-96].

¹⁰⁶ Downs, "Sino-Russian Energy Relations," 146-147.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 154-155.

¹⁰⁸ Keun-Wook Paik, *Sino-Russian Oil and Gas Cooperation*, 367-368.

¹⁰⁹ Philip Andrews-Speed, Xuanli Liao and Roland Dannreuther, *The Strategic Implications of China's Energy Needs*, Adelphi Paper 346 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 64.

pipeline, which was to be completed by 2005, would cost \$1.7 billion. It would carry 20 million tons per year from 2005-2010 and 30 million tons per year from 2010-2030.¹¹⁰

Soon, however, China faced competition from a competing route with Japan's support. In 2002, Russia's state pipeline monopoly, Transneft, proposed the construction of an export pipeline from Angarsk to the port of Nakhodka on Russia's Pacific Coast. Transneft officials argued that this route would have important economic advantages over the Angarsk-Daqing line. The oil pipeline to China would be cheaper to build, but it could serve only one market. A pipeline to Russia's Pacific Coast, by contrast, would allow Russia to export oil not only to Japan, but to the entire Asia-Pacific region, thus contributing to strategic diversity in Russia's energy export policy. This option would avoid excessive dependence on the China market and thus prevent China from gaining the upper hand in price negotiations.¹¹¹

In January 2003, Japan offered Russia large-scale financial support to build the pipeline to the Pacific. This support included \$5 billion for construction of the pipeline, which would have a capacity of 80 million tons per year, much greater than the proposed line to China. Japan offered an additional \$2 billion to finance oil exploration in Eastern Siberia. In May 2003, just days after Putin and Hu Jintao had endorsed the Angarsk-Daqing route during the Chinese leader's visit to Moscow, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi made his own visit to the Russian capital. During this meeting, Putin made clear that he was already having second thoughts about the pipeline to China and was intrigued by the Pacific route.¹¹² Russia perceived that it could play off

¹¹⁰ Keun-Wook Paik, *Sino-Russian Oil and Gas Cooperation*, 318; Lyle Goldstein and Vitaly Kozyrev, "China, Japan and the Scramble for Siberia," *Survival* 48 (2006), 165.

¹¹¹ Keun-Wook Paik, *Sino-Russian Oil and Gas Cooperation*, 322-326.

¹¹² Goldstein and Kozyrev, "China, Japan and the Scramble for Siberia," 170.

China and Japan against each other to obtain maximum financial support for the eventual pipeline project, while also increasing its geopolitical clout in the Asia-Pacific region.¹¹³

In the negotiations over a proposed pipeline to China, the Yukos oil company, owned by Mikhail Khodorkovsky, initially played a leading role. In May 2003, Yukos reached agreement with CNPC on the construction of the Angarsk-Daqing oil pipeline. Under this deal, Russia would supply China with a total of 700 million tons of oil for \$150 billion over 25 years.¹¹⁴ However, this agreement soon fell apart when the Russian state attacked Yukos. Following his election to the presidency, Putin was determined to harness Russia's vast energy resources to increase his country's global clout. In pursuit of this objective, he sought to expand state control of the energy sector.¹¹⁵ The attack on Yukos was a crucial event in this process.

During the first year of his presidency, Putin warned Khodorkovsky and other "oligarchs" who made their fortunes in questionable privatizations during the tumultuous 1990s to stay out of politics. Khodorkovsky ran afoul of the Kremlin by defying this directive. In February 2003, during a meeting broadcast on live television, Khodorkovsky confronted Putin over alleged corruption in the acquisition of Northern Oil by Rosneft, a state-owned oil company. Khodorkovsky alleged that Sergei Bogdanchikov, the CEO of Rosneft and a friend of Putin, overpaid for Northern Oil with state money.¹¹⁶ Khodorkovsky also attempted to set up a power base to rival the Kremlin and funded opposition parties such as Yabloko.¹¹⁷ Yukos negotiations

¹¹³ Bobo Lo, *Axis of Convenience: Moscow, Beijing, and the New Geopolitics* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2008), 144.

¹¹⁴ Keun-Wook Paik, *Sino-Russian Oil and Gas Cooperation*, 325; Goldstein and Kozyrev, "China, Japan and the Scramble for Siberia," 169.

¹¹⁵ Thane Gustafson, *Wheel of Fortune: The Battle for Oil and Power in Russia* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012); Marshall Goldman, *Petrostate*, pp. 14-15, 97-98 and passim; Stephen Blank, *Russo-Chinese Energy Relations*, 15.

¹¹⁶ *Putin, Russia, and the West*, Part 2, BBC documentary, 2012; Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 85; Keun-Wook Paik, *Sino-Russian Oil and Gas Cooperation*, 325; Goldstein and Kozyrev, "China, Japan and the Scramble for Siberia," 327.

¹¹⁷ Goldman, *Petrostate*, 14-15, 97-98 and passim; Blank, *Russo-Chinese Energy Relations*, 104, 113.

with China irritated Putin, who believed that the Russian government, not a private oil company, should make decisions about export pipeline routes.¹¹⁸ Khodorkovsky also expressed interest in selling parts of Yukos to Western oil majors such as Chevron or Exxon-Mobil. Putin feared that such a transaction would give foreign companies an unacceptable level of control over Russia's strategic energy sector, potentially including indirect control over an export route.¹¹⁹ During the summer of 2003, the Kremlin began its assault on Yukos, culminating in Khodorkovsky's arrest in October of that year and the subsequent dismantling and state takeover of the company.

During 2003 and 2004, Russia appeared increasingly inclined to construct the Pacific route. Japan raised the stakes, indicating that it would provide as much as \$15 billion of investment. This would have been a greater net investment than China was offering, even accounting for the considerably higher cost of the Pacific route.¹²⁰ This investment would be spread out along a longer route through economically struggling provinces in Siberia and the Russian Far East, a point that Japan stressed as it cultivated local Russian elites in these regions.¹²¹ China, meanwhile, insisted that it would not invest in an oil pipeline extending to Russia's Pacific coast without a branch to Daqing.¹²² In December 2004, Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov announced that Russia would build the East Siberia-Pacific Ocean (ESPO) oil pipeline to its Pacific coast. To allay concerns that the pipeline would pass too close to Lake Baikal, the Russian government announced that the pipeline would begin at Taishet, 250 kilometers northwest of Angarsk, and terminate at Perevoznaya Bay, not far from Nakhodka.¹²³

¹¹⁸ Keun-Wook Paik, *Sino-Russian Oil and Gas Cooperation*, 327.

¹¹⁹ Goldman, *Petrostate*, 111-112; Downs, "Sino-Russian Energy Relations," 155.

¹²⁰ Goldstein and Kozyrev, "China, Japan and the Scramble for Siberia," 163-164.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 170-171.

¹²² Keun-Wook Paik, *Sino-Russian Oil and Gas Cooperation*, 328.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 331; Lo, *Axis of Convenience*, 145.

On the very same day, Russian Energy Minister Viktor Khristenko said that CNPC might be offered a 20 percent stake in Yuganskneftegaz, the main production unit of Yukos that the Russian government was then endeavoring to bring under state control by seizing it as payment for back taxes that it claimed Yukos owed.¹²⁴ Many observers speculated that this offer was compensation for Russia's decision to renege on the agreement to build the Angarsk-Daqing pipeline.¹²⁵ China declined the offer for a minority stake in a unit that would soon be integrated into the largely state-owned Rosneft. Instead, it secured a commitment by Rosneft to ship 48.4 million tons of oil to China by rail from 2005 to 2010.¹²⁶ These shipments would serve as collateral for a \$6 billion loan provided by Chinese banks to help finance Rosneft's \$9.4 billion purchase of Yuganskneftegaz.¹²⁷ Although China welcomed these rail shipments of oil, a pipeline would offer a more stable, long-term, and cost-effective source of supply.¹²⁸

Russia's turn toward the Pacific route was frustrating for China, but China remained patient. To increase the pressure on Russia, China sharpened its interest in a Kazakhstan-China oil pipeline, an idea which made steady progress.¹²⁹ China and Kazakhstan began construction on this pipeline in September 2004, and the line was completed in December 2005.¹³⁰ In April 2005, Khristenko, the Russian energy minister, announced that the first stage of ESPO construction would connect Taishet with Skovorodino, a city located near the border with China. This left open the possibility

¹²⁴ Downs, "Sino-Russian Energy Relations," 156.

¹²⁵ Robert E. Ebel, *China's Energy Future: The Middle Kingdom Seeks Its Place in the Sun* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2005), p. 44; Blank, *Russo-Chinese Energy Relations*, 44-45.

¹²⁶ Blank, *Russo-Chinese Energy Relations*, 44-45.

¹²⁷ Anders Åslund and Andrew Kuchins, *The Russia Balance Sheet* (Washington, D.C.: Peterson Institute for International Economics and Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2009), 132; Downs, "Sino-Russian Energy Relations," 156-157.

¹²⁸ Downs, "Sino-Russian Energy Relations," 151.

¹²⁹ Bo Kong, *China's International Petroleum Policy*, 129-130; Goldstein and Kozyrev, "China, Japan and the Scramble for Siberia," 171.

¹³⁰ Bo Kong, *China's International Petroleum Policy*, 130.

that the pipeline spur from Skovorodino to Daqing might be built prior to ESPO's extension from Skovorodino to Russia's Pacific Coast.¹³¹

The pipeline saga reflected Russia's struggle to maximize the economic gains from its oil resources, but it also had geopolitical implications. Russia hoped not only to maximize profits, but to use pipeline export routes to increase its political influence in the Asia-Pacific region, which had waned following the breakup of the Soviet Union. Although Russia's relations with China were warming, Russian leaders sought to maintain geopolitical balance by cultivating relations with Japan and other major countries in the economically dynamic Asia-Pacific region. Some Russian analysts warned, however that Russia's wavering on the pipeline route, especially following the Slavneft and Stimul episodes, could cause China to lose confidence in Russia and exert a harmful effect on the bilateral relationship.¹³²

The color revolutions

The United States and Russia sharply disagreed over the war in Iraq, causing strains in their post-September 11 rapprochement. Nevertheless, it appeared initially that the war would not cause the relationship to rupture. In the months following the toppling of Saddam Hussein's regime, the United States and Russia sought to put their relationship back on track. However, a series of popular revolts in the former Soviet Union that became known as "color revolutions" caused far more serious damage to U.S.-Russia relations. The first color revolutions were the Rose Revolution in Georgia, which occurred in late 2003, and the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, which

¹³¹ Keun-Wook Paik, *Sino-Russian Oil and Gas Cooperation*, 332-333; Goldstein and Kozyrev, "China, Japan and the Scramble for Siberia," 173.

¹³² Лукин. Россия, США, Китай и война в Ираке. С. 111-112 [Lukin, "Russia, the USA, and China and the War in Iraq," 111-112].

took place one year later. In both cases, popular demonstrations against election fraud brought democratic, pro-Western forces to power.

Russia was concerned about these developments because they threatened to erode Russia's influence in former Soviet territories and, at least conceivably, to become a model that opposition forces in Russia might seek to emulate. China remained uninvolved in diplomacy between the United States and Russia at the time of the revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine. When the upheaval spread to Central Asia in the spring of 2005, however, China began to play a more active role. Russia and China shared an interest in preventing color revolutions in Central Asia, fearing that they would lead to instability and chaos. The color revolutions caused a sharp downturn in U.S.-Russia relations, but this trend occurred simultaneously with a significant improvement in U.S.-China relations. As a result, the focus of China-Russia cooperation shifted to the regional level, especially in Central Asia.¹³³

The Rose Revolution occurred in the wake of Georgia's parliamentary elections on November 2, 2003. The elections pitted Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze's party against opposition forces. Shevardnadze had served as Soviet foreign minister under Mikhail Gorbachev, whose efforts to improve relations with the West as part of "New Thinking" had led to the end of the Cold War. In the fall of 2003, several former members of Shevardnadze's party who had grown disillusioned with corruption now led the opposition. Mikheil Saakashvili and the other opposition leaders were pro-Western and sought Georgia's membership in NATO and the European Union. After the polls closed, the Central Election Commission, which was stacked with Shevardnadze supporters, announced that the president's party had won a plurality of votes. Observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), however, said that the elections

¹³³ 吴大辉：《中俄战略协作伙伴关系：十年实践的历史考察》，第 7-8 页 [Wu Dahui, "China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations: Historical Observations on Ten Years of Practice," 7-8].

failed to meet international standards. The opposition mounted large demonstrations, and its leaders, carrying roses, disrupted the opening session of parliament on November 22, insisting that Shevardnadze resign. Russia sent Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov, who had worked for Shevardnadze in the Soviet Foreign Ministry, to seek a solution. Shevardnadze agreed to a compromise that would keep him in power. After he later reneged on the deal, continued demonstrations by the opposition forced him to resign. On January 4, 2004, Saakashvili was elected president.¹³⁴

Saakashvili vowed to improve relations with Russia, but this relationship quickly deteriorated. Saakashvili's priorities, which were to integrate Georgia into Euro-Atlantic organizations and reassert central control over the country's breakaway regions, were at odds with Russia's preferences. Saakashvili also sought close relations with the United States, which viewed him as an example of the success of U.S. democracy promotion. Although the United States had sought to mediate between Shevardnadze and the opposition during the months leading up to the parliamentary elections, even urging the opposition not to mount large street demonstrations, many critics in Russia accused the United States of supporting the revolution with the aim of increasing its own influence along Russia's borders.¹³⁵

The Orange Revolution in Ukraine created even greater tensions in U.S.-Russia relations. In this case, it was the presidential election of November 2004 that stimulated the revolution. Russia supported the candidacy of Viktor Yanukovych, the chosen successor of departing President Leonid Kuchma. His main opponent was Viktor Yushchenko, a pro-Western candidate. Seeking to avoid a repeat of the events in Georgia, Russia invested considerable resources into Yanukovych's campaign. The United States, rather than endorsing either candidate, stressed that the election should be free and fair. To this end, USAID invested \$1.4 million in election-related

¹³⁴ Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 106-107.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 105-106, 109-110.

activities. The Soros Foundation spent \$1.3 million funding Ukrainian NGOs. More than two months before the election, Yushchenko suffered poisoning by dioxin, leaving his face disfigured. The poisoning remained unsolved, but an investigation revealed that the dioxin had come from a Soviet-era laboratory.¹³⁶

After an inconclusive first round of elections, the second round was held on November 22. Two days later, the Central Election Commission declared Yanukovych the winner, even though exit polls and parallel vote counts by NGOs showed that Yushchenko had prevailed. The orange-clad opposition forces, eventually one million strong, mounted a protest on the central Maidan Square. Secretary of State Colin Powell declared that the election results were illegitimate. Following mediation efforts by EU high representative Javier Solana, Russian Duma Speaker Boris Gryzlov, and the presidents of Poland and Lithuania, the Ukrainian Supreme Court declared the election results invalid and scheduled a new election for December 26. This time, Yushchenko was declared the winner.¹³⁷

Russia's careful attempt to engineer a favorable outcome had failed. Many critics in Russia argued that the United States was the driving force behind the Orange Revolution. The Russian government subsequently enacted measures designed to ensure that no such revolution would occur in Russia, including the formation of the pro-Kremlin Nashi youth group and restrictions on foreign NGOs. Russia was also concerned that the West would seek to pull Ukraine into its orbit, thus weakening Russia's influence in former Soviet territories.¹³⁸ If Ukraine were to join the West,

¹³⁶ Ibid, 112-114.

¹³⁷ Ibid, 114-115.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 115-116.

one Russian analyst warned, then Russia would be reduced to the old duchy of Muscovy and would be no better than a third-rate power on the international stage.¹³⁹

The color revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine were an important turning point in U.S.-Russia relations. Several U.S. officials, reflecting upon the evolution of U.S.-Russia relations during the Putin era, identified the Orange Revolution, in particular, as the crucial turning point in Putin's perceptions of the United States. U.S. support for the revolution, in Putin's view, threatened Russia's attempt to build a sphere of influence in former Soviet territories.¹⁴⁰ The color revolutions seemed to fit the declared U.S. aim of promoting democracy, which had been part of the justification for war in Iraq and later became part of the Bush administration's "freedom agenda." During Bush's Second Inaugural Address, which he delivered in January 2005, just weeks after the Orange Revolution, Bush declared that the freedom agenda would define his foreign policy.¹⁴¹ Russian leaders and analysts viewed this agenda skeptically, believing that democracy promotion was a cover for the pursuit of U.S. geopolitical goals, including the reduction of Russian power.¹⁴² In the years to come, both Georgia and Ukraine became flashpoints in a deteriorating U.S.-Russia relationship.

China, meanwhile, remained on the sidelines as the color revolutions unfolded in Georgia and Ukraine. However, when the upheaval arrived in Central Asia in the spring of 2005, China

¹³⁹ Интервью С. Рогова, Москва и Вашингтон: нестабильное партнерство // Независимая Газета. 31 мая 2006 г., С. 8 ["Moscow and Washington: Unstable Partnership," interview with Sergei Rogov, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, May 31, 2006, 8]. 见李静杰 [Li Jingjie]: 《中俄战略协作和中美俄“三角关系”》, 第 45 页 [Li Jingjie, "China-Russia Strategic Cooperation and China-U.S.-Russia 'Triangular Relations'," 45]. Rogov was the director of the Institute of the United States and Canada.

¹⁴⁰ Andrew C. Kuchins, *Elevation and Calibration: A New Russia Policy for America* (Washington, D.C.: Center on Global Interests, December 2016), 27.

¹⁴¹ Second Inaugural Address of George W. Bush, January 20, 2005, The Avalon Project at Yale Law School, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/21st_century/gbush2.asp.

¹⁴² Andrew Kuchins, "Russian Perspectives on China: Strategic Ambivalence," in *The Future of China-Russia Relations*, ed. James Bellacqua (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2009), 42.

perceived that it could no longer stand to the side.¹⁴³ The important events in this process were the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan in March and Uzbekistan's bloody crackdown on an uprising in Andijan in May. China's active diplomacy on this issue included significantly increased cooperation with Russia to resist color revolutions in Central Asia.

The Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan erupted following two rounds of parliamentary elections, held in February and March 2005, which observers viewed as fraudulent. Under the presidency of Askar Akayev, who had ruled the country since independence, corruption increased steadily. Akayev's political opponents feared that he would employ fraud to secure the election of a parliament that would change the constitution and allow him to remain in office. Following mass protests in Bishkek, the capital, as well as in Jalal-Abad and Osh, Akayev and his family fled to Russia through Kazakhstan. Kurmanbek Bakiyev, a former prime minister, won the newly scheduled presidential election. The revolution in Kyrgyzstan differed from those in Georgia and Ukraine, where pro-Western leaders took power. The opposition in Kyrgyzstan had no clear pro-Western proclivities and no clear commitment to democratic reform. The major U.S. concern was its military base at Manas airport near Bishkek, which supported U.S. operations in Afghanistan. Bakiyev raised the issue of an eventual U.S. departure from the base during his first press conference, but he soon agreed to allow the U.S. military to remain. The United States and Russia were not aligned with opposing sides, as they had been in Ukraine, so the Tulip Revolution did not become a source of diplomatic conflict between the two countries.¹⁴⁴

The next country in Central Asia to face domestic upheaval was Uzbekistan, where a domestic uprising occurred in the eastern city of Andijan in May 2005. No color revolution

¹⁴³ 郑羽主编：《中俄美在中亚：合作与竞争》，社会科学文献出版社，2007年，第174页 [Zheng Yu, ed., *China, Russia, and the United States in Central Asia: Cooperation and Competition* (Beijing: Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Press, 2007), 174]; Kuchins, "Russian Perspectives on China: Strategic Ambivalence," 42-43.

¹⁴⁴ Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 116-118.

occurred here, however, as the ruling regime employed repressive measures and survived. The precipitating event was the upcoming verdict for twenty-three businessmen who belonged to Akramiya, an Islamist organization, and stood accused of “extremism, fundamentalism and separatism.” As the verdict approached, supporters of the businessmen gathered in the central square outside the courthouse. During the night following the businessmen’s conviction, a group of armed men broke into the prison and freed them before entering government buildings and taking officials hostage. On the evening of the following day, after Karimov flew into Andijan to observe the situation firsthand, government forces opened fire on the protesters in the square, killing many of them.¹⁴⁵ The government of Uzbekistan claimed that its forces killed 187 people, all of whom were Islamist terrorists or insurgents who posed a threat to the government. Human rights organizations disagreed, claiming that around 800 people, mostly innocent civilians, were killed.¹⁴⁶ Uzbekistan rejected calls by the United States and the European Union for an independent investigation of the events in Andijan, and the exact circumstances remained murky.¹⁴⁷

The Andijan events and the ensuing U.S. criticism of Uzbekistan’s government provided an opportunity for Russia to regain influence in Tashkent. Russia seized this opportunity in cooperation with China and its other partners in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). After the September 11 terrorist attacks, the United States had gained access to the Karshi-

¹⁴⁵ Alexander Cooley, *Great Games, Local Rules: The New Great Power Contest in Central Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 38-39; Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 120.

¹⁴⁶ Cooley, *Great Games, Local Rules*, 39.

¹⁴⁷ For an account that supports the position of the government of Uzbekistan, see Shirin Akiner, *Violence in Andijan, 13 May 2005: An Independent Assessment* (Washington, D.C.: Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, July 2005), https://www.silkroadstudies.org/resources/pdf/SilkRoadPapers/2005_akerin_violence-in-andijan-13-may-2005.pdf. For an account supporting accusations of human rights abuses by the government of Uzbekistan, see Human Rights Watch, *Bullets Were Flying Like Rain: The Andijan Massacre* (New York: Human Rights Watch, June 2005), <https://www.hrw.org/report/2005/06/06/bullets-were-falling-rain/andijan-massacre-may-13-2005>.

Khanabad (K2) military base in Uzbekistan, which supported operations in Afghanistan. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, who had negotiated U.S. access to the base, supported Karimov following the events in Andijan, but most other top U.S. officials criticized the Karimov regime's repression. Karimov, who was infuriated by the criticism, began to consider evicting the U.S. military from the Karshi-Khanabad base.

Uzbekistan appealed for and received diplomatic support from Russia, China, and the other members of the SCO. Although Karimov consistently sought to maintain Uzbekistan's foreign policy independence, these countries were attractive partners for him, in the aftermath of the Andijan events, because they were willing to provide diplomatic support for his regime without lecturing him on democracy and human rights.¹⁴⁸ During the summit of heads of state that was held in Astana, Kazakhstan, in July 2005, the SCO issued a declaration calling for outside actors, a clear reference to the United States and its NATO allies, to establish a timetable for withdrawal from their military bases on the territory of SCO member countries.¹⁴⁹ Karimov made the original proposal, which Russia enthusiastically embraced. It eventually received support from the other members, including China.¹⁵⁰ Later that month, Uzbekistan ordered U.S. forces to withdraw from the K2 military base within six months. In November, one week after the U.S. withdrawal from the base, Uzbekistan signed a treaty of alliance with Russia and re-joined the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), from which it had withdrawn in 2002. Kyrgyzstan, which suddenly

¹⁴⁸ Лузянин С.Г. *Россия и Китай в Евразии*. М.: ИДВ РАН, 2009. С. 131 [Sergei Luzyanin, *Russia and China in Eurasia* (Moscow: Institute of the Far East, 2009), 131].

¹⁴⁹ For the text in English, see "Declaration by the Heads of Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization," Astana, July 5, 2005, <http://eng.sectesco.org/documents/>. For the text in Russian, see Декларация глав государств-членов Шанхайской организации сотрудничества, г. Астана, 5 июля 2005 года, <http://rus.sectesco.org/documents/>. For the text in Chinese, see 上海合作组织成员国元首宣言, 2005年7月5日, 阿斯塔纳, <http://chn.sectesco.org/documents/>.

¹⁵⁰ Author's interview with Sanat Kushkumbayev, Deputy Director of the Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies, Almaty, Kazakhstan, September 30, 2006; Cooley, *Great Games, Local Rules*, 39.

became the lone remaining host country for a U.S. base in Central Asia, sought and received a substantial increase in rent from the United States.¹⁵¹

This series of events represented a setback for U.S. influence in Central Asia, which had increased significantly along with the U.S.-led military campaign in Afghanistan. The primary beneficiary of the weakened U.S. position was Russia, which took advantage of the unexpected turn of events to improve its relations with Uzbekistan and thereby recover some of its lost influence in Central Asia.¹⁵² Russia attributed the color revolutions to U.S. plots to replace existing Central Asian elites, who had come to power during the Soviet era and were largely sympathetic to Russia, with pro-Western elites, thereby enhancing U.S. influence in the region at Russia's expense. Opposition to color revolutions therefore became a priority for Russian policy toward Central Asia.¹⁵³ Moreover, some Russian analysts warned, the United States had no intention of forming an equal partnership with Russia and would instead seek to foment a color revolution in Russia itself.¹⁵⁴

The SCO's response to the events in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan also indicated growing cooperation by Russia and China to limit U.S. influence in Central Asia.¹⁵⁵ Both countries accepted the U.S. military presence in Central Asia, which promised to weaken terrorist groups in the region and thereby increase their own security, provided that its duration remained limited. Chinese

¹⁵¹ Cooley, *Great Games, Local Rules*, 39-40.

¹⁵² Pavel K. Baev, "Russia's Counterrevolutionary Offensive in Central Asia." Policy Memo No. 399. Center for Strategic and International Studies, Program on New Approaches to Russian Security (PONARS) Policy Conference, December 9, 2005, Washington, D.C.

¹⁵³ Dmitri Trenin, "Russia and Central Asia: Interests, Policies, and Prospects," in Eugene Rumer, Dmitri Trenin, and Huasheng Zhao, *Central Asia: Views from Washington, Moscow, and Beijing* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2007), 92.

¹⁵⁴ Фалин В., Евстафьев Г. О вероятном сценарии действий США в отношении России в 2006 - 2008 годах [Valentin Falin, Gennady Yevstafyev, "Of the probable scenario of U.S. actions in relation to Russia in 2006-2008], <http://polithexogen.ru/info/38745.html>.

¹⁵⁵ 赵华胜:《中国的中亚外交》,时事出版社,2008年,第249页 [Zhao Huasheng, *China's Central Asian Diplomacy* (Shishi Chubanshe, 2008), 249].

analysts, however, perceived worrying signs that the United States was preparing for a long-term presence.¹⁵⁶ Moreover, both countries used the SCO vote to express their opposition to further color revolutions in Central Asia.¹⁵⁷ Like Russia, China viewed the color revolutions skeptically, fearing that they would lead to chaos, not stability. Chinese analysts portrayed the color revolutions as part of the Bush administration's strategy to strengthen the U.S. "hegemonic" position and to contain China and Russia.¹⁵⁸ If these revolutions were successful, from the U.S. perspective, then the new regimes that emerged would be pro-Western and less friendly toward China than their predecessors, as well as less inclined to play active roles within the SCO.¹⁵⁹ China was concerned that democratic movements in Central Asia would spread across the border into its own western province of Xinjiang, potentially causing instability.¹⁶⁰ The convergence of Russian and Chinese attitudes toward the color revolutions led some Western analysts to perceive an emerging confrontation between Western support for democracy and authoritarian forces led by Russia and China.¹⁶¹ The common position that China and Russia held toward the color revolutions was another example of the way in which overlaps in national identity had driven the two countries together and strengthened their partnership.¹⁶² By 2005, common concerns about U.S. policies and

¹⁵⁶ 赵华胜：《中国的中亚外交》，第 246 页 [Zhao Huasheng, *China's Central Asian Diplomacy*, 246].

¹⁵⁷ Никитина, Ю.А. *ОДКБ и ШОС: модели регионализма в сфере безопасности*. Москва: Навона, 2009, С. 112 [Yuliya Nikitina, *The CSTO and the SCO: Models of Regionalism in the Security Sphere* (Moscow: Havona, 2009, 112].

¹⁵⁸ 郑羽主编：《中俄美在中亚：合作与竞争》，社会科学文献出版社，2007 年，第 171 页 [Zheng Yu, ed., *China, Russia, and the United States in Central Asia: Cooperation and Competition* (Beijing: Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Press, 2007), 171].

¹⁵⁹ 赵华胜：《中国的中亚外交》，第 253 页 [Zhao Huasheng, *China's Central Asian Diplomacy*, 253].

¹⁶⁰ 郑羽主编：《中俄美在中亚：合作与竞争》，第 175 页 [Zheng Yu, ed., *China, Russia, and the United States in Central Asia: Cooperation and Competition*, 175]; Cooley, *Great Games, Local Rules*, 82.

¹⁶¹ Kuchins, "Russian Perspectives on China: Strategic Ambivalence," 43.

¹⁶² Gilbert Rozman, *The Sino-Russian Challenge to the World Order: National Identities, Bilateral Relations, and East Versus West in the 2010s* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2014), 249, 274.

values had forged a durable, if limited, partnership between China and Russia.¹⁶³ The two countries continued to express this convergence of views in cooperation at the global level.

China-Russia cooperation at the global level in 2005

During this period, China-Russia strategic cooperative relations focused primarily on the regional level, especially in response to the threat of color revolutions in Central Asia. However, the two countries continued to engage in cooperation at the global level as well. During the summer of 2005, the two countries issued another joint declaration on the international order and held their first joint military exercises.

On July 1, during Hu Jintao's visit to Moscow, the two countries' leaders signed a joint declaration on world order in the twenty-first century.¹⁶⁴ This declaration stressed the two countries' convergent views on several major international issues and asserted that "peace and development" were still the main themes of the era. In contrast with the statement on multipolarity that China and Russia had issued in 1997, this declaration not only elucidated the two countries' common views, but also emphasized their historic responsibility for establishing a new international order.¹⁶⁵ Like the 1997 document, this statement called for a multipolar world. The two countries, were, however, undergoing changes in their approaches to multipolarity. China, which argued strenuously for multipolarity during the 1990s, reduced its rhetorical emphasis on this point during the 2000s. One reason was that Chinese analysts, though they perceived the rise

¹⁶³ Rozman, *Chinese Strategic Thought Toward Asia*, 117.

¹⁶⁴ 《中俄关于 21 世纪国际秩序的联合声明》(2005 年 7 月 1 日), 新华网, ["China-Russia Joint Declaration on the 21st-Century International Order, July 1, 2005], http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2005-07/01/content_3164594.htm.

¹⁶⁵ 吴大辉: 《中俄战略协作伙伴关系: 十年实践的历史考察》, 第 9 页 [Wu Dahui, "China-Russia Strategic Cooperative Partnership Relations: Historical Observations on Ten Years of Practice," 9].

of power centers around the world, had concluded that the current international structure of “one superpower, many great powers” was nevertheless likely to last for a long period to come.¹⁶⁶ Another reason was that China, especially after joining the World Trade Organization, was reaping substantial benefits from its participation in the existing international order.¹⁶⁷ Finally, China shifted its emphasis from multipolarity to seeking increased leverage with both Russia and the United States.¹⁶⁸ Russia, by contrast, warmed to the idea of multipolarity, viewing it as a way to recover its great-power status.¹⁶⁹ For precisely this reason, Russia opposed not only unipolarity, but also the formation of a new U.S.-China bipolarity, which threatened to marginalize Russia in international affairs.¹⁷⁰

In another apparent sign of increased international cooperation, China and Russia held their first-ever joint military exercises in August 2005. These exercises, called Peace Mission 2005, were conducted under SCO auspices. They involved just over 10,000 soldiers, more than 90 percent of whom were Chinese, as well as 140 naval ships and submarines, Russian Tu-22M long-range bombers, and Tu-95 strategic bombers. Military leaders from both China and Russia said that the drills, which the participating countries conducted on China’s Shandong Peninsula and in the surrounding waters, simulated the deployment of troops to restore order in a third country facing large-scale ethnic unrest.¹⁷¹ They said that the exercises were designed to strengthen the

¹⁶⁶ 胡树祥主编：《中国外交与国际发展战略研究》，北京，2009年，第109页 [Hu Shuxiang, ed., *Research on China's Diplomacy and International Development Strategy* (Beijing, 2009), 109]. Цит. по Портяков, В.Я. Становление Китая как ответственной глобальной державы. Москва: ИДВ РАН. 2013. С. 96, 110 n7 [Cited in Vladimir Portyakov, *Establishment of China as a Responsible Global Power* (Moscow: Institute of the Far East, 2013, 96, 110 n7].

¹⁶⁷ Портяков. Становление Китая как ответственной глобальной державы. С. 96 [Vladimir Portyakov, *Establishment of China as a Responsible Global Power*, 96].

¹⁶⁸ Rozman, *Chinese Strategic Thought Toward Asia*, 116.

¹⁶⁹ Yury E. Fedorov, “‘Boffins’ and ‘Buffoons’: Different Strains of Thought in Russia's Strategic Thinking,” Chatham House, Briefing Paper, March 2006, 5.

¹⁷⁰ 赵华胜：《普京外交八年及其评价》，《现代国际关系》，2008年，第2期，第17页 [Zhao Huasheng, “An Assessment of Putin’s Eight Years of Diplomacy,” *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* 2008 (2): 17].

¹⁷¹ Claire Bigg, Russia: Joint Military Exercises With China A Result of New Strategic Partnership, *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, Aug. 18, 2005.

two countries' capabilities to fight terrorism and extremism jointly and were not directed at any third country. For China's People's Liberation Army (PLA), the exercises also offered an opportunity for training in the use of weapons systems that China had purchased from Russia.¹⁷² Outside observers suggested additional possible motives. Some argued that China, which initially suggested holding the exercises across from Taiwan, intended to send a signal to the island. China also may have designed the exercises' heavy focus on maritime operations to send a message to Japan.¹⁷³ Others suggested that an additional goal was to show the United States that Russia and China were capable of close partnership.¹⁷⁴

Limited China-Russia Global Partnership Before the Financial Crisis (2005-2008)

Despite the joint declaration on world order and the joint military exercises, China-Russia cooperation at the global level during this period was relatively restrained. This trend continued during the period leading up to the international financial crisis that erupted in 2008, another turning point in international politics. The primary reason was that, not for the first time, U.S.-Russia relations and U.S.-China relations exhibited opposite trends. In the years following the color revolutions, especially Ukraine's Orange Revolution, U.S.-Russia relations deteriorated. Putin's speech at the Munich Security Conference in February 2007, in which he sharply criticized U.S. foreign policy, made this deterioration dramatically apparent. U.S.-China relations, by

¹⁷² 刘志青：《2005 年中俄联合军事演习述评》，中俄关系的历史与现实（第二遍），国际学术讨论会，中国中俄关系史研究会，2008 年 4 月 20-22 日，第 662-674 页 [Liu Zhiqing, "Analysis of the 2005 China-Russia joint military exercises," International Academic Symposium, China Research Seminar on the History of China-Russia Relations, April 20-22, 2008, 662-674], <http://jds.cass.cn/Item/9124.aspx>.

¹⁷³ Elizabeth Wishnick, "Brothers in Arms Again? Assessing the Sino-Russian Military Exercises," Pacific Forum, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), PacNet Number 35, Aug. 18, 2005.

¹⁷⁴ See comments by Ivan Safranchuk, then-director of the Moscow Center for Defense Information, quoted in Claire Bigg, Russia: Joint Military Exercises With China A Result of New Strategic Partnership, *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, Aug. 18, 2005.

contrast, were relatively cooperative during the period leading up to the financial crisis. China's demand for strategic cooperation from Russia, therefore, was less than Russia's corresponding demand of China. Therefore, although China-Russia relations remained on a solid footing, their strategic partnership at the global level remained underdeveloped.

U.S.-Russia relations suffer a downturn

Beginning around 2005, U.S.-Russia relations suffered a downturn featuring disagreement on many issues. As discussed above, the color revolutions were a major turning point. Putin objected to what he perceived as U.S. efforts to limit Russia's influence along its periphery, including in former Soviet territory, and to foment regime change within Russia itself. Perceived changes in the two countries' relative power also had an impact on the relationship. The setbacks that the United States faced in foreign policy, including an insurgency and civil war in Iraq, ongoing instability in Afghanistan, and the continued challenge of halting the nuclear programs of Iran and North Korea, contributed to perceptions that the United States was in decline, or at least had encountered the limits of its ability to project power worldwide. Russia, by contrast, seemed to be enjoying a revival of power and was therefore emboldened. Rising oil prices stimulated economic growth and increased government revenues.¹⁷⁵ The possibility that Russia could use its large oil and gas reserves as a geopolitical weapon raised the specter of the country as an emerging "energy superpower."¹⁷⁶ From the perspective of power cycle theory, Russia was approaching the

¹⁷⁵ Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 135-136.

¹⁷⁶ Angela Stent, "An Energy Superpower? Russia and Europe," in *The Global Politics of Energy*, ed. Kurt M. Campbell and Jonathon Price (Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute, 2008).

lower turning point on a new cycle. If it could surpass this point, then it would embark on a period of accelerated growth in relative power.¹⁷⁷

Following the events in Central Asia, Putin challenged the United States in several areas. He exerted economic pressure on Ukraine and Georgia, cutting off gas to Ukraine on New Year's Day 2006 amid a price dispute and imposing economic sanctions on Georgia during the fall of 2006 following the expulsion of Russian spies from that country. He also hosted Hamas leaders in March 2006, approved a large arms sale to the Hugo Chavez regime in Venezuela, and announced that foreign companies would be prohibited from participation in the development of Russia's Shtokman offshore gas field.¹⁷⁸ Dmitri Trenin, a leading Russian foreign policy analyst, described Russia's disillusionment during the summer of 2006. "Until recently," he wrote, "Russia saw itself as Pluto in the Western solar system, very far from the center but still fundamentally a part of it. Now it has left that orbit entirely: Russia's leaders have given up on becoming part of the West and have started creating their own Moscow-centered system."¹⁷⁹ Some Western analysts argued that a new cold war between Russia and the West was emerging.¹⁸⁰

Throughout Bush's presidency, Russia also endeavored to soften United Nations resolutions condemning Iran for its nuclear program. Despite the revelation in 2002 of Iran's previously secret uranium enrichment facility at Natanz, Russia consistently argued that Iran sought only nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. In 2005, Russia strengthened safeguards at the Bushehr nuclear plant that it was building for Iran and reached an agreement under which Iran would return spent fuel to Russia. The United States urged the UN Security Council to address

¹⁷⁷ Charles F. Doran, "Imperatives of European Security at Russia's Critical Point on its Power Cycle," *Stosunki Międzynarodowe – International Relations*, nr 2 (t. 51) 2015, 93-105.

¹⁷⁸ 郑羽主编:《中俄美在中亚:合作与竞争》,第176-177页 [Zheng Yu, ed., *China, Russia, and the United States in Central Asia: Cooperation and Competition*, 176-177].

¹⁷⁹ Dmitri Trenin, "Russia Leaves the West," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 4 (July/August 2006), p. 87.

¹⁸⁰ Edward Lucas, *The New Cold War: The Future of Russia and the Threat to the West* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

Iran's nuclear program, but Russia insisted that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) should handle the issue. Russia also opposed new sanctions against Iran. Eventually, following negotiations among the United States and Russia, as well as Britain, France, and Germany, which represented the EU, the Security Council placed the issue of Iran's nuclear program on its agenda. Along with Germany, the five permanent members of the Security Council addressed the issue through the P5+1 process. In December 2006, the Security Council passed Resolution 1737, which called for Iran to suspend all uranium enrichment and reprocessing and imposed sanctions. Further resolutions in 2007 and 2008 added to the pressure on Iran. Russia succeeded, however, in weakening the sanctions that the United States and the EU countries proposed. Russia also approved the sale of the S-300 air defense system to Iran in 2007.¹⁸¹ Like Russia, China sought to reduce the sanctions' impact on Iran, a country with which it enjoyed a growing economic relationship.¹⁸² In contrast with the Six Party Talks on North Korea's nuclear program, in which China played a leading role, China allowed Russia to take the lead in the effort to soften international sanctions on Iran.

The fate of democracy and human rights in Russia added to U.S.-Russia tensions. Bush muted his criticism of Russia's record on democracy early in his presidency, but he became more vocal as the freedom agenda came to define his foreign policy. In February 2005, before the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan and the Andijan incident in Uzbekistan, Bush endured a difficult summit meeting with Putin in Bratislava, Slovakia, during which Putin bristled at Bush's expression of concern about the state of democracy in Russia.¹⁸³ In May 2006, during a speech in Vilnius, Lithuania, Vice President Dick Cheney sharply criticized Russia. After praising the Baltic states,

¹⁸¹ Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 150-153.

¹⁸² Christensen, *The China Challenge*, 232-233.

¹⁸³ Elisabeth Bumiller and David E. Sanger, "Bush and Putin Exhibit Tension Over Democracy," *New York Times*, February 25, 2005.

the Central European states, Georgia, and Ukraine for their democratic progress, Cheney criticized those in Russia who sought to reverse democratic reforms in their country. He also criticized Russia for attempting to use energy resources as a political weapon and to undermine the territorial integrity of its neighbors. Putin replied a few days later during a meeting with Russian lawmakers: “As the saying goes, Comrade Wolf knows whom to eat, it eats without listening, and it clearly is not going to listen to anyone.”

That fall, two prominent critics of Putin’s government, Anna Politkovskaya and Alexander Litvinenko, were murdered. Politkovskaya, a journalist who had reported on alleged human rights abuses by the Russian military in Chechnya, was shot to death in her apartment building. Litvinenko, a former Federal Security Service (FBS) agent, suffered polonium poisoning after meeting with Russian agents at a restaurant in London. That same year, Vladislav Surkov, Putin’s deputy chief of staff, introduced the term “sovereign democracy” to describe Russia’s political system. Although Putin expressed reservations about the use of this term, the message was that Russia had its own unique political system that should not be subject to outside criticism.¹⁸⁴

Putin expressed his dissatisfaction with the United States most dramatically during his speech at the Munich Security Conference in February 2007. He argued that unipolarity, understood as “one center of power, one center of force, and one center for taking decisions,” was unjust, incompatible with democracy, and ultimately unsustainable because it could not attract the world’s moral support. He singled out the United States for criticism: “Today we are witnessing an almost uncontained hyper use of force—military force—in international relations, force that is plunging the world into an abyss of permanent conflicts. One state and, of course, first and foremost the United States, has overstepped its national borders in every way.” Putin asserted that

¹⁸⁴ Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 138-146.

the world was already becoming multipolar, with economic power shifting to the BRIC countries of Brazil, Russia, India, and China.¹⁸⁵ He believed that the United States would have to adjust to this new reality.¹⁸⁶

Together with the assertiveness that Russia had shown in the preceding couple of years, Putin's Munich speech put pressure on China to join Russia in taking a tougher line against the United States. Just a few years earlier, in the aftermath of the 2001 terrorist attacks, Chinese leaders had worried that Putin would tilt too far toward the West. Now, they grew concerned that Putin would seek to enlist them in efforts to oppose the United States that could prove destabilizing, precisely at a time when China was satisfied with trends in its own development. They preferred to remain aloof while allowing Russia to bear the burden of criticizing the United States.¹⁸⁷

Missile defense was one security issue on which Russia continued to press for changes in U.S. policy. In July 2007, three years after Bush gave the policy initial approval, the United States began negotiations to deploy radars in the Czech Republic and interceptors in Poland. These installations would be components of a missile defense system that was designed, U.S. officials said, to protect the United States and its allies from a potential nuclear attack from Iran or North Korea. U.S. officials argued that the planned missile defense system would lack the capability to defend against Russia's large nuclear arsenal and therefore posed no threat to Russia's nuclear deterrent. Russian officials nevertheless objected strenuously to this deployment. They feared that the United States eventually would expand the system to an extent that would threaten Russia's deterrent. They particularly objected to the installation of these components in former Warsaw

¹⁸⁵ Путин В. Выступление и дискуссия на Мюнхенской конференции по вопросам политики безопасности. 10 февраля 2007 г. [Vladimir Putin, Speech and discussion at the Munich conference on the politics of security, February 10, 2007], <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24034>.

¹⁸⁶ Clifford G. Gaddy and Andrew C. Kuchins, "Putin's Plan," *The Washington Quarterly* (Spring 2008).

¹⁸⁷ Rozman, *Chinese Strategic Thought Toward Asia*, 111, 118-119, 126.

Pact countries near Russia's territory. Putin countered with a proposal that the United States and Russia cooperate on missile defense using a radar station that Russia rented in Azerbaijan, but U.S. officials concluded that the plan was technically infeasible. In December 2007, a frustrated Putin announced that Russia would suspend its participation in the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) in retaliation for the planned U.S. missile defense deployments.¹⁸⁸

In the wake of these developments, a series of events in 2008 foreshadowed the deepest rupture, up to that point, in U.S.-Russia relations since the end of the Cold War. By 2008, disagreement between the United States and Russia over the status of Kosovo came to a head. The United States concluded that only independence for Kosovo would prevent a further outbreak of violence between Serbs and ethnic Albanian Kosovars. Russia's rejection of this conclusion made UN approval for Kosovo's independence unattainable. Putin warned on multiple occasions that U.S. and EU support for Kosovo's independence could backfire on the West. He argued that the same set of rules for ethnic self-determination should apply in the Caucasus as in the Balkans. In the face of Russia's defiance, Kosovo declared its independence in February 2008, receiving support from the United States and a majority of EU countries.¹⁸⁹

Then the issue of potential NATO membership for Ukraine and Georgia caused further tension. In advance of the summit of NATO heads of state in Bucharest, scheduled for April 2008, both countries sought membership action plans (MAPs) that would put them on the path to eventual membership in the alliance. Putin made clear that he considered such an outcome to be unacceptable. With his own administration divided on the issue, Bush decided to support MAPs for both countries. At Bucharest, however, he also faced a divided alliance. The NATO heads of state ultimately decided not to offer MAPs to the two countries for the time being, but their joint

¹⁸⁸ Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 153-156.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 160-161.

declaration stated, “We agreed today that Georgia and Ukraine will become members of NATO.”¹⁹⁰ Putin, who arrived later that day for a meeting of the NATO-Russia Council, expressed strong opposition to NATO’s promise of eventual membership for the two countries, no matter how ambiguous it was. In a conversation with Bush, he said that Ukraine was “not even a country.”¹⁹¹

These events set the stage for the clash in Georgia that erupted in August 2008. During this period, the United States placed its hopes for improved relations with Russia on Dmitri Medvedev. Facing his constitutional limit of two consecutive terms as president, Putin had struck a deal with Medvedev in which the two leaders would switch positions for the next four years. Amid the downturn in U.S.-Russia relations that preceded the war in Georgia, Putin continued to cultivate relations with China. His speech in Munich indicated that he hoped to use the growing economic power of the BRIC countries, including China, as leverage in relations with the West. Medvedev continued Putin’s approach, visiting China soon after taking office in May 2008. The continued positive trends in U.S.-China relations, however, limited the extent of China-Russia cooperation at the global level during this period.

Continued warming of U.S.-China relations

The largely positive development of U.S.-China relations that gained momentum around 2003 continued in the years leading up to the 2008 financial crisis. The Bush administration continued to encourage China’s development as a “responsible stakeholder,” in Robert Zoellick’s phrase. The United States sought to engage China through dialogues on economic and security

¹⁹⁰ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Bucharest Summit Declaration, April 3, 2008, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_8443.htm.

¹⁹¹ Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 163-168.

issues, with the goal of encouraging China's interdependence with the world economy and support for the international system. This arrangement was largely suitable for China during a period in which it perceived an opportunity to focus on domestic modernization and economic growth.¹⁹² This was the case despite some divergence in the U.S. and Chinese understandings of "responsibility." The United States encouraged China to assume greater responsibility for good governance and the protection of political rights. China, by contrast, placed emphasis on respect for sovereignty and noninterference in other states' internal affairs. China resented any suggestion that global responsibility was equivalent to adopting policies that the United States preferred.¹⁹³ Nevertheless, China perceived the advantages of this framework for relations with the United States. It was consistent with the overall foreign policy strategy that China had pursued since the era of Deng Xiaoping, and especially since 1996, of seeking to maintain positive relations with its neighbors and with the United States.

Zoellick and his Chinese counterpart, Dai Bingguo, created the bilateral Strategic Dialogue. In December 2006, Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson and his counterpart, Vice Premier Wu Yi, initiated the Strategic Economic Dialogue, which would meet twice per year to discuss bilateral and global economic issues. Among other items, the Strategic Economic Dialogue discussed issues in the U.S.-China economic relationship that contributed to global economic imbalances. The United States urged China to revalue its currency, which China kept undervalued to support its export industries. Partly as a result of the undervalued RMB, China ran large current account surpluses with the United States and with the world as a whole. U.S. efforts appeared to achieve results, as the RMB appreciated by approximately 21 percent between 2005 and 2008. The two

¹⁹² Sutter, *Chinese Foreign Relations*, 148.

¹⁹³ David M. Lampton, *The Three Faces of Chinese Power: Might, Money, and Minds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 259-260.

sides also discussed the adjustments in macroeconomic policy that were required of the United States in order to address global imbalances, in particular the need for the United States to reduce its current account deficits and government debt.¹⁹⁴ Chinese leaders were frustrated by the failure of Chinese state oil firm CNOOC's bid to purchase the U.S. oil firm UNOCAL in 2005, but the Strategic Economic Dialogue at least allowed U.S. leaders to explain that resistance from Congress, not the executive branch, had scuttled the deal.¹⁹⁵

In the security realm, the United States and China remained engaged in the Six Party Talks. The September 2005 agreement quickly fell apart. On July 4, 2006, North Korea tested a long-range missile. In October of that year, North Korea tested a nuclear device for the first time. China harshly condemned both tests. In each case, it supported a Security Council resolution that imposed sanctions on North Korea.¹⁹⁶ In late 2006 and early 2007, China quietly increased diplomatic and economic pressure on North Korea.¹⁹⁷ At this juncture, as throughout the Six Party Talks, China and Russia sought to prevent regime change in Pyongyang. Thomas Christensen, who participated in the talks as a State Department official, writes that Chinese and Russian officials were especially receptive to proposals stressing the U.S. willingness to accept a denuclearized North Korea.¹⁹⁸ In negotiating the wording of UN Security Council resolutions, Chinese and Russian diplomats also sought to remove any mention of the possible use of force and to allow sanctions to be adjusted if North Korea were to change its behavior.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁴ Christensen, *The China Challenge*, 218-220.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 222.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 227-230.

¹⁹⁷ Victor Cha, *The Impossible State: North Korea, Past and Future* (New York: Ecco Books, 2012), 268. Cited in *ibid*, 230, 347 n25.

¹⁹⁸ Christensen, *The China Challenge*, 228-229.

¹⁹⁹ Elizabeth Wishnick, "Why a 'Strategic Partnership'? The View from China," in *The Future of China-Russia Relations*, ed. James Bellacqua (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2009), 67.

By February 2007, North Korea increased its willingness to negotiate. That month, North Korea agreed to allow the Yongbyon nuclear facility to be disabled, to disclose all of its nuclear activities up to that point, and to move toward denuclearization. In return, the United States would provide North Korea with heavy fuel oil and other benefits. By June 2008, U.S. government engineers and technicians had neutralized many of the Yongbyon facility's operations. Later that year, however, the Six Party Talks broke down once again and were not resumed during Barack Obama's presidency.²⁰⁰ The sustained engagement of the United States and China, along with Russia and the other participants in the Six Party Talks, over a period of five years was notable. It was in keeping with the generally positive trends in U.S.-China relations during this period. Yet this modest success could not conceal the ultimate failure of the talks, which left a dangerous problem to fester for years to come.

During this period, the United States and China made the mutual calculation that stable bilateral relations were in each of their interests. The United States calculated that as China's interdependence increased, and as it became increasingly socialized into norms of international behavior, its commitment to upholding the international order would grow. China, in turn, calculated that the United States would not seek to thwart its growing power.²⁰¹ Despite U.S. concerns about China's rise, Chinese leaders and strategists had several reasons to be confident in this respect. For the foreseeable future, the United States would be preoccupied with more pressing security challenges, including the war on terrorism, wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the nuclear programs of Iran and North Korea. Chinese leaders also recognized that their country had become indispensable in addressing a range of international challenges, including nuclear proliferation, environmental threats, and health issues.

²⁰⁰ Christensen, *The China Challenge*, 230-231.

²⁰¹ Lampton, *The Three Faces of Chinese Power*, 274.

Moreover, they perceived that the rise of other power centers in addition to China, including the EU, Russia, Japan, and India, would inevitably constrain the exercise of U.S. power. In some cases, as in China's desire to prevent the use of force or the imposition of heavy sanctions against Iran, China could rely on others, including Russia and possibly some EU countries, to play the leading role in opposing the United States.²⁰² China's leaders therefore shared Putin's view, which he expressed in his Munich speech, that the global dispersion of power would naturally constrain U.S. foreign policy. In this view, China and Russia could leverage the other's power in order to check the United States. To some extent, this process would act naturally, without the need for the two countries to increase their strategic cooperation significantly, let alone form an alliance.

From the perspective of power cycle theory, China took satisfaction in its continued rise to power. Although the consensus view among Chinese strategists continued to project that the United States would remain the world's sole superpower until sometime in the 2030s, recent events had revealed some of the limits of U.S. power. China's increased self-confidence was apparent in its resistance to criticism of its crackdown in Tibet in March 2008 and in its staging of the Beijing Olympics in August of that year. Despite the stability in U.S.-China relations during the preceding years, therefore, questions arose about China's trajectory and intentions. Despite its recent emphasis on multilateralism and pragmatic cooperation with other great powers, China continued to defend interpretations of sovereignty and noninterference in other states' domestic politics that were at odds with liberal principles that the United States and other Western countries sought to promote in the international community. China's economic prowess offered benefits to other major

²⁰² Ibid, 261-264.

economies in the Asia-Pacific region, but those countries also grew nervous about China's growing power.²⁰³

Nevertheless, the general trend in U.S.-China relationship during the period covered in this chapter was positive. China's relative satisfaction with the U.S.-China relationship limited the scope for China-Russia strategic cooperation at the global level during this period. With U.S. influence in Central Asia suffering a setback following the events in Uzbekistan, China and Russia turned their attention to issues at the bilateral level, where they began to make halting but significant progress in the energy sector.

Progress in China-Russia bilateral relations

Despite the limitations of the China-Russia strategic partnership during this period, China and Russia continued to engage in some cooperation at the global level. China and Russia participated in international efforts to address the North Korean and Iranian nuclear programs, but both countries sought to forestall the use or threat of force and to soften international sanctions against these two regimes. In 2007, China and Russia held their second set of joint military exercises, called Peace Mission 2007, in Chelyabinsk, Russia, and Urumqi, the capital of China's Xinjiang Province. Once again, they conducted these exercises under the framework of the SCO.²⁰⁴ China and Russia also issued a joint declaration on major international issues. This document stressed familiar themes, such as the inevitability of world multipolarity, the importance of

²⁰³ Rozman, *Chinese Strategic Thought Toward Asia*, 115, 128-129.

²⁰⁴ For an analysis of these joint military exercises, see Roger N. McDermott, "The Rising Dragon: SCO Peace Mission 2007," The Jamestown Foundation, Occasional Paper, October 2007.

upholding the authority of the United Nations and the Security Council, and the two countries' opposition to missile defense systems and the militarization of outer space.²⁰⁵

China and Russia continued to discuss the possible construction of pipelines that would deliver oil and gas from Russian territory into China. In 2005, it became clear that Russia would not commit exclusively to the Pacific route for an oil pipeline. Instead, Russia made plans for the eventual construction of ESPO, but with a spur to China. In January 2006, at the height of a gas crisis with Ukraine, Putin stated publicly that he expected construction of the Taishet-Nakhodka pipeline to begin later that year. Russia would begin by building the first stage connecting Taishet to Skovorodino. From there, a spur to China could easily be built.²⁰⁶ In March 2006, Transneft and PetroChina signed a memorandum of understanding for a feasibility study on construction of the section of a potential China spur extending from Skovorodino to the Chinese border. This agreement was announced during Putin's visit to Beijing that same month.²⁰⁷ Construction of the first stage of ESPO began in April 2006.²⁰⁸ However, as oil prices spiked, Russia sought to renegotiate its oil pricing agreement with China, creating a dispute that slowed progress on the pipeline and a possible spur to China.²⁰⁹ The construction of an oil pipeline to China was moving closer to reality, but the deal was not yet done.

Russia and China also discussed cooperation in the gas sector, though cooperation in this area was even slower than in oil. The most promising source of Russian gas for export to China was the Kovykta gas field, which is located in East Siberia near the Chinese border. This field,

²⁰⁵ Joint Statement of The People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation On Major International Issues, Beijing, May 23, 2008, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/2649_665393/t465821.shtml.

²⁰⁶ Blank, *Russo-Chinese Energy Relations*, 46; Bo Kong, *China's International Petroleum Policy*, 138.

²⁰⁷ Keun-Wook Paik, *Sino-Russian Oil and Gas Cooperation*, 333, 356.

²⁰⁸ Скорлыгина Н. “Транснефть” начинает строительство ВСТО.” Коммерсантъ. 18.4.2006 [Natalya Skorligina, “Transneft Begins Construction of ESPO,” *Kommersant*, April 18, 2006], <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc.aspx?DocsID=667408>.

²⁰⁹ 吴景峰: 《中俄能源合作的战略性分析》, 第 96 页 [Wu Jingfeng, “A Strategic Analysis of China-Russia Energy Cooperation,” 96]; Downs, “Sino-Russian Energy Relations,” 163.

which holds about 1.9 tcm of gas, is Russia's third-largest undeveloped field. In 2003, BP formed a joint venture with the private Russian oil company TNK. This joint venture, known as TNK-BP, purchased a 62.9 percent stake in the consortium that held the license to develop Kovykta. TNK-BP had proposed a 4,000-kilometer pipeline that would supply China with 20 billion cubic meters of gas per year and South Korea with 10 billion cubic meters per year.²¹⁰

This joint venture, however, also fell victim to Russia's rising resource nationalism. Because Gazprom held a monopoly over Russia's gas export pipelines, TNK-BP had no independent way to export the gas. TNK-BP sought repeatedly to negotiate an export agreement with Gazprom, but was unsuccessful. Unable to export the gas, TNK-BP failed to achieve the level of production specified in its contract for Kovykta. Gazprom exploited this Catch-22 to delay and eventually derail TNK-BP's plans to export Kovykta gas.²¹¹ Under an agreement in principle struck in 2007, Gazprom was to purchase TNK-BP's controlling stake in the Kovykta field.²¹² However, this deal stalled when the two companies were unable to reach agreement on the final price. In March 2010, TNK-BP announced that it intended to reach agreement by the end of the year to sell its stake in Kovykta to Rosneftgaz, a state holding company that controlled the Russian government's 75.16 percent stake in Rosneft and its 10.74 percent stake in Gazprom.²¹³ In March 2013, Rosneft purchased TNK-BP in a \$55 billion deal.²¹⁴

Even as TNK-BP was tangling with Gazprom, Russia deepened its interest in gas exports to China, provided these exports were firmly under state control. During Putin's March 2006 visit to Beijing, Russia promised to build two natural gas pipelines to China, costing a total of up to \$10

²¹⁰ Downs, "Sino-Russian Energy Relations," 152.

²¹¹ Ibid, 155-156, 162.

²¹² Ibid, 162.

²¹³ Catherine Belton, "TNK-BP poised to sell Kovykta gas field," *Financial Times*, March 24, 2010.

²¹⁴ Vladimir Soldatkin and Andrew Callus, "Rosneft pays out in historic TNK-BP deal completion," *Reuters*, March 21, 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/03/21/us-rosneft-tnkbp-deal-idUSBRE92K0IZ20130321>.

billion. Under this agreement, Russia would supply China with 60 billion to 80 billion cubic meters of gas per year, with the pipelines expected to be ready by 2011.²¹⁵ This amount would equal up to half of Russia's current gas exports to Europe. One of the gas pipelines, the "Altai" line, would originate at gas fields in West Siberia, pass through Russia's region of Altai, and arrive at Russia's short western border with China between Kazakhstan and Mongolia. This pipeline would connect with China's West-East Gas Pipeline, which runs from Xinjiang to Shanghai. The other gas pipeline would begin at the Kovykta natural gas field and enter China's Northeast. Despite this agreement, negotiations on gas pipelines would continue for many years to come.

The war in Georgia

Russia's five-day war against Georgia in August 2008 brought U.S.-Russia relations to a new low point in the post-Cold War era, but it also demonstrated some of the limits of the China-Russia strategic partnership. Russia-Georgia relations had grown steadily worse since the 2003 Rose Revolution. After Kosovo declared its independence in February 2008, Russia argued that Abkhazia and South Ossetia, two breakaway regions in Georgia, should by the same logic gain independence as well. The statement that NATO heads of state issued in Bucharest during their summit meeting in April 2008, which declared that Georgia and Ukraine would become members of NATO, infuriated Russia, even though NATO refrained from offering membership action plans to these two countries. Tensions between Russia and Georgia built steadily throughout the summer. Georgia participated in U.S.-led military exercises on its own territory in July, along with forces from other post-Soviet states that had sent forces to Iraq and Afghanistan. Russia conducted its

²¹⁵ Richard McGregor and Andrew Yeh, "Putin signs energy cooperation deals with China," *Financial Times*, March 20, 2006; Andrew Yeh, Richard McGregor, Arkady Ostrovsky and Carola Hoyos, "Russian gas deal with China raises fears of cuts to Europe," *Financial Times*, March 22, 2006.

own military exercises in the North Caucasus region near the border with Georgia. U.S. officials warned Saakashvili not to allow Russia to bait him into military action, which would result in Georgia's defeat.²¹⁶

The war broke out on the night of August 7, just as Beijing was preparing for the opening ceremony of the 2008 Summer Olympics. The events that precipitated hostilities remain murky. Georgia launched a major artillery attack against Tskhinvali, the capital of South Ossetia, resulting in the deaths of Ossetes and Russian peacekeeping forces deployed in the region. Russia accused Georgia of aggression, but Georgian officials insisted that they acted in response to a Russian invasion.²¹⁷ Russian troops entered Georgia in force on the following day. The Georgian government also suffered a simultaneous cyberattack that crippled many of its functions. Russian forces easily defeated their Georgian opponents but refrained from marching on Tbilisi. With French President Nicolas Sarkozy acting as mediator, Russia and Georgia declared a cease-fire on August 12. On August 25, Russia recognized South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states.²¹⁸ Russia's victory in the war appeared to send the message that Russia would tolerate no further efforts to integrate former Soviet territories in Euro-Atlantic institutions.²¹⁹ In late August, Medvedev declared that Russia was entitled to a sphere of "privileged interests" that would be located "in the border region, but not only."²²⁰

In the immediate aftermath of the war, Russia turned to China and the other members of the SCO for support. Shortly after the war broke out, China had issued a vague response. A

²¹⁶ Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 168-170.

²¹⁷ The European Union's September 2009 report on the war, *Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia*, blamed both sides equally for the outbreak of the war. Cited in Angela E. Stent, *The Limits of Partnership: U.S.-Russian Relations in the Twenty-First Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 172. For an account that is sympathetic to Georgia's version of events, see Ronald D. Asmus, *A Little War That Shook the World: Georgia, Russia, and the Future of the West* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

²¹⁸ Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 171-173.

²¹⁹ Trenin, *Post-Imperium*, 32-33; Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 176.

²²⁰ Andrew E. Kramer, "Russia Claims Its Sphere of Influence in the World," *New York Times*, Aug. 31, 2008.

spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that China expressed “grave concern” over the conflict and called for all parties involved to exercise restraint and agree to an immediate ceasefire.²²¹ At the end of August, just days after Russia recognized the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, the SCO held its summit of heads of state in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. Russia received some diplomatic backing at this meeting, but not full support for its policies. China and the other SCO states were privately sympathetic with Russia’s view that Georgia provoked the conflict and that Russia’s intervention was justified.²²² However, they did not support independence for the two breakaway regions. Indeed, only a handful of countries around the world did so. The statement’s wording was cautious: “The member states of the SCO express their deep concern in connection with the recent tension around the issue of South Ossetia, and call on the relevant parties to resolve existing problems in a peaceful way through dialogue, to make efforts for reconciliation and facilitation of negotiations.” The declaration did not express support for Russia’s military action explicitly, but it noted that the member states “support the active role of Russia in promoting peace and cooperation in the region.”²²³

China could not support Russia’s recognition of the two breakaway regions’ independence because this would have conflicted with its support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, a longstanding pillar of its foreign policy. China was concerned about separatism because of the implications for China’s own territorial integrity. Recognition of the breakaway regions’ independence would have set an especially worrying precedent for its own continued control over

²²¹ Foreign Ministry Spokesman Qin Gang’s Remarks on the Conflicts in South Ossetia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, August 10, 2008.

²²² Cooley, *Great Games, Local Rules*, 83.

²²³ For the text in English, see Shanghai Cooperation Organization, “Dushanbe Declaration by the Heads of the Member States of the SCO,” Aug. 28, 2008, <http://eng.sectesco.org/documents/>. For the text in Russian, see Шанхайская Организация Сотрудничества, Душанбинская Декларация, 28 августа 2008 г., <http://rus.sectesco.org/documents/>. For the text in Chinese, see 上海合作组织, 上海合作组织成员国元首杜尚别宣言, 2008年8月28日, <http://chn.sectesco.org/documents/>.

Tibet and Xinjiang and for its efforts to reunify Taiwan with the PRC. Support for Russia's position on Abkhazia and South Ossetia also would have conflicted with the mission of the SCO, one of the main goals of which was to combat the "three evil forces" of separatism, extremism, and terrorism.²²⁴ The SCO's Central Asian member states also sought to uphold the principle of territorial integrity and therefore opposed Russia's recognition of the two breakaway regions' independence. China's position gave them political cover to maintain this stance at the SCO meeting.²²⁵

In the view of some Western analysts, the war in Georgia demonstrated the hollowness of the China-Russia strategic partnership, as the two countries failed to maintain solidarity during a crisis.²²⁶ Other analysts argued that the SCO's failure to offer full support to Russia's position in the aftermath of the war in Georgia was a crisis for the organization.²²⁷ At least in their public statements, however, Russian officials did not view the summit as a defeat. At the summit's conclusion, Russian President Dmitri Medvedev expressed satisfaction with the SCO's understanding of, and support for, Russia's position.²²⁸

Several Russian and Chinese analysts argued that the summit's outcome was acceptable to both sides. In the view of some Russian analysts, despite the other member states' unwillingness to support Russia's recognition of the two breakaway regions' independence, the organization

²²⁴ Elizabeth Wishnick, *Russia, China and the United States in Central Asia: Prospects for Great Power Competition and Cooperation in Central Asia* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2009). Cited in Cooley, *Great Games, Local Rules*, 83, 212 n43.

²²⁵ Cooley, *Great Games, Local Rules*, 83.

²²⁶ See for example Bobo Lo, "Russia, China, and the Georgia Dimension," Centre for European Reform, Oct. 1, 2008, <http://www.cer.eu/publications/archive/bulletin-article/2008/russia-china-and-georgia-dimension>.

²²⁷ See for example Stephen Blank, "The Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Georgian Crisis," *China Brief*, Volume VIII, Issue 17, Sept. 3, 2008; Niklas Swanström, "Georgia: The Split that Split the SCO," *CACI Analyst*, Sept. 3, 2008.

²²⁸ Медведев Д. Ответы на вопросы журналистов по завершении заседания Совета глав государств – членов ШОС. 28 августа 2008 года [Dmitri Medvedev, "Answers to journalists' questions at the conclusion of the summit of heads of member states of the SCO, Aug. 28, 2008], <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/1242>.

effectively stood on Russia's side in the war.²²⁹ Others noted that in closed-door meetings at the summit, member states' support for Russia's position on the war was clear.²³⁰ For Russia and its fellow SCO members, the joint statement of the SCO heads of state was an acceptable result reached through negotiation. Ultimately, the difference in opinion did not lead to a rift or to long-lasting damage, either in China-Russia relations or in the functioning of the SCO.²³¹ This episode demonstrated that the interests and viewpoints of China and Russia sometimes diverged, and that their full support for each other was not automatic. Nevertheless, China took no action to hinder Russia's pursuit of its objectives. In this instance, China's limited support for Russia was sufficient for Russia's purposes.

Conclusion

During the period lasting from the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 to the war in Georgia, China-Russia relations continued to develop steadily. The two sides expanded cooperation at the bilateral, regional, and global levels. Their partnership remained, however, a limited one.²³² The two sides continued to pursue cooperation at the bilateral level, though with mixed results. Achievements in bilateral economic relations continued to be disappointing.

²²⁹ Блинов А. ШОС взял сторону Москвы. Одобрение партнерами действий России поможет сплочению организации. Независимая газета. 28 августа 2008 г. [Artur Blinov, "The SCO took the side of Moscow: The approval of Russia's actions by its partners will help the organization's unity," *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, Aug. 28, 2008], http://www.ng.ru/world/2008-08-28/100_shos.html.

²³⁰ 赵华胜:《上海合作组织评析和展望》,时事出版社,2012年,第98页 [Zhao Huasheng, *The Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Analysis and Prospects* (Shishi Chubanshe, 2012), 98]. Zhao Huasheng cites an article by Andrei Grozin, a Central Asia expert at the Commonwealth of Independent States Institute in Moscow: Грозин А. Россия укрепляет позиции в Центральной Азии [A. Grozin, "Russia strengthens positions in Central Asia."]

²³¹ 赵华胜:《俄格冲突与上海合作组织》,《和平与发展》,2009年,第1期,第36-37页 [Zhao Huasheng, "The Russia-Georgia conflict and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization," *Heping Yu Fazhan* 2007 (1): 36-37; 赵华胜:《上海合作组织评析和展望》,时事出版社,2012年,第97-98页 [Zhao Huasheng, *The Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Analysis and Prospects* (Shishi Chubanshe, 2012), 97-98].

²³² Lo, *Axis of Convenience*; Richard Weitz, *China-Russia Security Relations: Strategic Parallelism Without Partnership or Passion?* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2008).

Military-technical cooperation remained a highlight of the relationship, with volumes of Russian arms sales to China reaching new heights, but new arms sales declined considerably after 2005. The two sides pursued tortuous negotiations over the eventual construction of oil and gas pipelines from Russia to China. They also expanded regional cooperation, especially in Central Asia, where they worked within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. In the wake of the color revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine, the spread of domestic upheaval to Central Asia provided a new focus for China-Russia cooperation in the region. Here, this cooperation achieved concrete results, as the U.S. withdrawal from its military base in Uzbekistan signaled that the U.S. military presence in the region would not be of unlimited duration.

At the international level, China and Russia engaged in limited cooperation. The two sides shared common views on many international issues and a common desire to limit what they considered to be the undesirable effects of the unipolar structure of the international system. They continued to issue rhetorical challenges to the unipolar world order and to U.S. foreign policy decisions that they opposed. The initiation of regular joint military exercises in 2005 signaled to the United States that China and Russia could strengthen their partnership if necessary. Russian arms sales to China also began to improve China's position in the military balance of the Asia-Pacific region. In the view of some international relations scholars, some of the actions that China and Russia took during this period, including the SCO's 2005 declaration calling for a timetable for the withdrawal of U.S. military bases from Central Asia and the Peace Mission joint military exercises, constituted further "soft balancing."²³³

²³³ Robert A. Pape, "Soft Balancing Against the United States," *International Security* 30, no. 1 (2005): 7-45; T.V. Paul, "Soft Balancing in the Age of U.S. Primacy," *International Security* 30, no. 1 (2005): 46-71; Stephen M. Walt, *Taming American Power: The Global Response to U.S. Primacy* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005); Stephen M. Walt, "Alliances in a Unipolar World," *World Politics* 61, no. 1 (2009): 103-106.

During this period, however, a series of factors combined to limit the effects of China-Russia cooperation on the international system. As had been the case since the breakup of the Soviet Union, traditional hard balancing remained impractical because China and Russia lacked the aggregate power to counter U.S. power effectively.²³⁴ Nor did China and Russia perceive an urgent need to engage in hard balancing. Both countries benefited from their participation in the global economy, which fostered interdependence, and neither country feared U.S. invasion.

Moreover, the flow of events and the evolution of the two countries' power trajectories also limited their cooperation at the international level. In the immediate aftermath of the September 11 attacks, Russia sought to improve relations with the United States. This caused some unease among Chinese leaders, who were concerned that the U.S.-Russia rapprochement would come at China's expense. Russia and China both opposed the war in Iraq. However, Russia joined with France and Germany to express vocal public opposition, while China maintained a low-key approach. The color revolutions, especially the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, soured U.S.-Russia relations, which deteriorated for the next several years. The shared interest of China and Russia in stopping the spread of color revolutions, especially in Central Asia, yielded some of the decade's most productive China-Russia cooperation. Meanwhile, U.S.-Russia relations continued to deteriorate for the next several years.

The color revolutions contributed to Russia's increasingly negative view of the West, but the factor that enabled Russia to resist the West more forcefully as the decade progressed was its own growth in power. Russia's steady economic growth from 2000-2008, fueled by high oil and gas prices, contributed to the revival of Russian power, which had fallen precipitously in the

²³⁴ Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, *World Out of Balance: International Relations and the Challenge of American Primacy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 72-77; Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, "Hard Times for Soft Balancing," *International Security* 30, no. 1 (2005): 72-108.

aftermath of the Soviet collapse. This trend increased Russia's confidence, especially as setbacks in U.S. foreign policy seemed to confirm the limits of U.S. power. By 2008, Russia felt confident enough to strike a blow against Georgia's pro-Western aspirations and, by extension, against any further expansion of Euro-Atlantic institutions into the post-Soviet region. Although China did not support Russia's recognition of the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, Chinese leaders approved of Russia's efforts to resist any further eastward shift of NATO and U.S. influence.²³⁵

The improvement in U.S.-China relations during this period, however, limited China's desire to join with Russia to balance the United States. China perceived the first two decades of the twenty-first century as a strategic window of opportunity to focus on domestic modernization and the consolidation of China's national power. The best way to pursue these goals, in their view, was persist in the strategy that Deng had outlined in the 1980s, and which Chinese leaders had followed consistently since 1996 after a period of foreign policy assertiveness in the early 1990s. This strategy called for China to foster an amicable international environment enabling the country to focus on domestic issues. Forming an alliance or close partnership with Russia to resist the United States aggressively would have undermined these objectives.

In the years leading up to the financial crisis of 2008, therefore, both China and Russia were experiencing growth in national power. Both countries also perceived that the United States, which faced challenges in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, had encountered the limits of its power. The trend toward multipolarity, which China and Russia had supported for more than a decade in joint declarations, seemed to be gaining momentum. Putin expressed this theme in his 2007 speech in Munich, and Chinese leaders shared this view. The international structure consisting of one superpower and many great powers would last for many more years, but the

²³⁵ Лукин. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 352 [Lukin, "From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 352].

growing aggregate weight of the other great powers seemed likely to act as a natural constraint on the exercise of U.S. power. The outbreak of the global financial crisis in September 2008, however, administered a shock to the international system and prompted reassessments of future dynamics within the U.S.-China-Russia triangle.

Chapter 5

From the Financial Crisis to the Ukraine Crisis and Its Aftermath

The global financial crisis that erupted in September 2008 had important implications for international politics, including relations within the U.S.-Russia-China triangle. The stock market collapse led to a deep recession in the United States, and the Russian economy, which faced the shock of a collapse in oil prices, suffered more than any other major economy in the world. The financial crisis and resulting global recession also affected the Chinese economy, especially through reduced world demand for Chinese exports, which fell sharply. However, with help from a large stimulus package, the Chinese economy passed through the global recession in relatively good condition, maintaining annual GDP growth rates that never fell below 6 percent.

In the period following the outbreak of the financial crisis, China's foreign policy toward the United States and neighboring countries became more assertive on several issues than it had been for more than a decade. Many observers believed that Chinese leaders had concluded, in the wake of the financial crisis, that U.S. power was on the wane and therefore increasingly open to challenge. Meanwhile, the United States and Russia, whose bilateral relationship had reached a post-Cold War low at the time of the war in Georgia, pursued a "reset" of relations under new President Barack Obama. The financial crisis also had immediate implications for China-Russia relations, as China finally secured Russia's agreement to the construction of a new oil pipeline spur through an "oil for loans" deal.

The U.S.-Russia reset achieved some important successes, including the conclusion of a new strategic arms control treaty, Russian support for tightened sanctions against Iran, and U.S.-Russia cooperation on the Northern Distribution Network, a transport corridor supporting U.S.

military operations in Afghanistan that passed through Russian territory. However, a series of issues caused the reset to break down, including domestic protests in Russia over Vladimir Putin's announced intention to return to the presidency in 2012, Russia's granting of asylum to former U.S. government contractor Edward Snowden following his leak of classified information, and disagreements over Syria. The crisis in Ukraine, which began in late 2013 and led to the toppling of the Ukrainian government, Russia's annexation of Crimea, and Russian support for an insurgency in eastern Ukraine, brought U.S.-Russia relations to yet another post-Cold War low.

As U.S.-Russia relations deteriorated, the outlines of a potential great-power confrontation between the United States and China became more apparent. The Obama administration announced a "pivot to Asia," which aimed to shift the focus of U.S. strategy away from the Middle East and toward the Asia-Pacific region, where leading administration officials believed that the most important strategic challenges of the future lay. In late 2010 and early 2011, China appeared to pull back somewhat from its assertive behavior during the period that followed the financial crisis. However, China soon resumed its new assertiveness. This was most apparent in the South China Sea, where China made expansive territorial claims and took several measures to strengthen them, most notably the construction of artificial islands and the installation of military infrastructure on them.

The simultaneous deterioration of U.S.-Russia relations and increased tension in U.S.-China relations facilitated a growing strategic convergence between China and Russia. Even before the Ukraine crisis erupted, Russia had attempted its own pivot to Asia. In the wake of the Ukraine crisis, facing diplomatic isolation and Western sanctions, Russia's need for outreach to China grew. China, meanwhile, perceived both the desirability of cultivating Russia as a counterweight to the West and the opportunity to gain concrete advantages from Russia's isolation, including new deals

in energy and arms. As a result of these trends, the China-Russia relationship, which had been essentially a normal relationship in the period from the collapse of the Soviet Union until 2014, now became, in the words of a former U.S. ambassador to China, “unhealthily close.”¹

From the Financial Crisis to the Ukraine Crisis (2008-2014)

Breakthrough on Russia-China oil pipeline spur

The global financial crisis, which erupted just one month after the war in Georgia, had immediate implications for Russia’s energy policies toward Asia. The financial crisis and the ensuing collapse in oil prices struck a heavy blow to Russia’s energy sector and overall economy. Rosneft, the largest state-owned oil company, and Transneft, the state-owned pipeline monopoly, both of which were desperate for cash, turned to China for loans. In October 2008, Russia and China reached initial agreement on an “oil for loans” deal, which they finalized the following February after resolving a disagreement over interest rates. Under this deal, China agreed to loan \$15 billion to Rosneft and \$10 billion to Transneft. Russia, in turn, agreed to build a pipeline spur to China, branching off from the East Siberia-Pacific Ocean (ESPO) oil pipeline, and to provide China with 15 million tons of oil per year over the following twenty years.² The Russia-China pipeline spur would begin operation prior to the completion of ESPO’s construction. This was the second time in four years that Rosneft had turned to China for loans, in both cases during periods

¹ J. Stapleton Roy, “Sino-Russia Relations in a Global Context: Implications for the United States,” in Michael S. Chase et al, *Russia-China Relations: Assessing Common Ground and Strategic Fault Lines*, The National Bureau of Asian Research, NBR Special Report #66, July 2017, 40.

² Catherine Belton, “Beijing lends Russia \$25bn for 20 years of oil supplies,” *Financial Times*, Feb. 18, 2009, 2; Keun-Wook Paik, *Sino-Russian Oil and Gas Cooperation: The Reality and Implications* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 349; 冯玉军, 赵春潮: 《金融危机冲击与俄罗斯能源政策调整》, 《中外能源》, 2009 年第 14 卷, 第 10 页 [Feng Yujun and Zhao Chunchao, “The Impact of the Financial Crisis and the Adjustment of Russia’s Energy Strategy,” *Zhongwai Nengyuan* 2009 (14): 10].

of tension in Russia's relations with the West.³ The pipeline spur was soon under construction. In April 2009, construction began on the Russian section from Skovorodino to the Chinese border, and in May 2009 construction opened on the Chinese section, from the border city of Mohe to Daqing.⁴

On August 29, 2010, Putin opened the 67-kilometer Russian section of the pipeline spur, which was built by Transneft.⁵ The entire pipeline spur to Daqing went into operation on January 1, 2011. For the first time, Russia could now ship oil by pipeline directly to China, without transit through a third country. When Putin attended the opening ceremony for the Russian section of the China pipeline spur, he pledged that Russia eventually would provide China with 30 million tons of oil per year (600,000 barrels per day), an increase over the original amount of 15 million tons (300,000 b/d). The price that China would pay for oil shipped through the pipeline spur was equal to the free-on-board price of oil shipped from Russia's new oil transshipment port at Kozmino Bay, the projected terminus of the ESPO pipeline's second stage.⁶ After the pipeline opened, China and Russia had to settle some price disputes that arose.⁷

³ Anders Åslund and Andrew Kuchins, *The Russia Balance Sheet* (Washington, D.C.: Peter G. Peterson Institute for International Economics and Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2009), p. 132.

⁴ "China-Russia oil pipeline serves both sides," *Xinhua*, May 11, 2009, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2009-05/11/content_7762691.htm.

⁵ Isabel Gorst, "Russia opens China pipeline for Siberian oil," *Financial Times*, Aug. 29, 2010; "Putin hails China ties at oil pipeline completion," *Reuters*, Aug. 29, 2010, <http://www.reuters.com/article/idAFLDE67S02720100829?rpc=44>; Jason Corcoran, "Russia Will Boost Oil Exports to China With New Pipeline From East Siberia," *Bloomberg*, Aug. 29, 2010, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2010-08-29/russia-will-boost-oil-exports-to-china-with-new-pipeline-from-east-siberia.html>; 《普京亲自开启中俄能源管道》，环球时报，2010年8月30日，第三版 [*Huanqiu Shibao*, "Putin personally opens the China-Russia energy pipeline," Aug. 30, 2010, 3].

⁶ "Russian crude oil exports to the Pacific Basin—ESPO starts flowing," *Platts Special Report*, May 2010, 4.

⁷ Andrew Higgins, "China finds promise and setbacks in pursuit of Russian energy," *Washington Post*, Dec. 28, 2011, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/china-finds-promise-and-peril-in-pursuit-of-russian-energy/2011/11/27/gIQA1H9hzO_print.html.

In the view of one Chinese analyst, the oil for loans deal and the construction of the pipeline spur represented a new, breakthrough stage in China-Russia energy relations.⁸ This breakthrough was typical of a pattern in China-Russia energy relations, however. In both the oil and gas sectors, China and Russia engaged in protracted negotiations over the construction of pipelines. Russia continually sought the best possible use of its energy resources to maximize its economic and geopolitical interests, while China patiently sought the best possible deal for itself. In this case, as in the major China-Russia gas contract signed in May 2014, Russia struck a deal at a time when it found itself under economic and diplomatic duress, allowing China to drive a favorable bargain. The financial crisis and the oil for loans deal therefore underscored the long-term dynamics of China-Russia relations, in which Russia, despite its revival on the strength of high energy prices during the first decade of the twenty-first century, faced a growing gap in relative power compared to China.

China's increasingly assertive foreign policy

The Obama administration entered office vowing to carry out a “pivot” toward the Asia-Pacific region. The administration’s most influential advocate of this approach was Kurt Campbell, who served as Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs during Obama’s first term. He had argued for years that military campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan distracted U.S. attention from the Asia-Pacific region, the most economically dynamic part of the world and scene of the major strategic challenges that the United States would face in the future, including the rise of China. The pivot to Asia was designed to correct this alleged misallocation of U.S. attention

⁸ 《夏义善：中俄能源合作立足长远、全面发展》，《对外经贸》，2009年7月22日 [“Xia Yishan: China-Russia Energy Cooperation is Established in Long-Term, Full Development,” *Duiwai Jingmao*, July 22, 2009], <http://commerce.dbw.cn/system/2009/07/22/000146624.shtml>.

and resources.⁹ This strategy had political, military, and economic components, some of which were already being implemented before Obama entered office. The United States strengthened its military forces in the region by, among other actions, increasing its Marine presence in Darwin, Australia. The Obama administration promoted the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a free-trade initiative that originated among countries in the region. The administration also activated its regional diplomacy, for example by signing the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation and joining the East Asia Summit.¹⁰ “The United States is back,” Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said during a visit to Thailand in July 2009.¹¹

The pivot to Asia represented a clear attempt to strengthen the U.S. position in the region in preparation for the challenge of addressing China’s rise. At the same time, the Obama administration also sought to offer strategic reassurance to China.¹² The administration hoped to work with China to address a range of international issues. Although the idea never became official U.S. policy, former National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski and other analysts outside of government promoted the idea of a G-2, in which China would become the main U.S. partner in addressing global challenges.¹³ During the first two years of the Obama administration, however, China’s behavior in a series of incidents and on a range of issues appeared to become increasingly assertive. Together, these actions represented at least a partial break with the foreign policy of multilateralism and reassurance that China had pursued since 1996.

⁹ For an account of this strategy that Campbell wrote after leaving the Obama administration, see Kurt M. Campbell, *The Pivot: The Future of American Statecraft in Asia* (New York: Twelve, 2016).

¹⁰ Thomas J. Christensen, *The China Challenge: Shaping the Choices of a Rising Power* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2015), 248-249.

¹¹ “U.S. ‘Is Back’ in Asia, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton Declares,” *New York Daily News*, July 21, 2009, <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/world/u-s-back-asia-secretary-state-hillary-clinton-declares-article-1.429381>.

¹² “China’s Arrival: The Long March to Global Power,” Deputy Secretary of State James B. Steinberg, Keynote Address, Center for a New American Security, Sept. 24, 2009; Thomas J. Christensen, *The China Challenge: Shaping the Choices of a Rising Power* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2015), 251-252.

¹³ Zbigniew Brzezinski, “The Group of Two that could change the world,” *Financial Times*, Jan. 13, 2009.

This pattern began early in Obama's first term, when Chinese military and civilian ships harassed the *Impeccable*, a U.S. Navy ocean surveillance ship, in international waters south of China's Hainan Island in March 2009. At the end of that year, following the disappointing results of the December 2009 climate change conference in Copenhagen, Western negotiators blamed China for obstructing the conclusion of a strong international agreement.¹⁴ China responded harshly to the Obama administration's announcement of new arms sales to Taiwan in January 2010 and to the Dalai Lama's meeting with Obama the following month. Obama had delayed both actions until after his visit to China in November 2009.

During a meeting in March 2010, high-ranking Chinese officials reportedly told their visiting U.S. counterparts, in what would have represented an important shift in China's foreign policy, that the South China Sea was "a core interest, on par with Taiwan and Tibet."¹⁵ In July 2010, while attending an annual security forum of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in Hanoi, Vietnam, Secretary of State Clinton spoke in favor of freedom of navigation, asserted that maritime territorial claims were legitimate only if based on international law, and offered U.S. support for efforts to create a code of conduct in the region. Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi responded angrily, criticizing countries in the region for turning to outside actors such as the United States for support and saying that "China is a big country and other countries are small countries and that's just a fact."¹⁶

Following North Korea's nuclear and missile tests during the spring of 2009, China bolstered its support for the North Korean regime. The next year, following the sinking of the South Korean naval ship *Cheonan* in March, China defended North Korea in the UN Security

¹⁴ Jeffrey Bader, *Obama and China's Rise: An Insider Account of America's Asia Strategy* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2012), 67.

¹⁵ Edward Wong, "Chinese Military Seeks to Extend Its Naval Power," *New York Times*, April 23, 2010.

¹⁶ John Pomfret, "U.S. takes a tougher tone with China," *Washington Post*, July 30, 2010.

Council despite an international commission's finding that a North Korean submarine had sunk the ship. Similarly, China protected North Korea from international criticism after the regime in Pyongyang revealed a secret uranium-enrichment site during the fall of 2010 and shelled a South Korean island in November of that year. China also reacted angrily to Japan's arrest of a Chinese fishing boat captain and his crew in September 2010. The Chinese boat had intentionally rammed a Japanese Coast Guard vessel in waters near disputed islands in the East China Sea that Japan calls the Senkaku and China calls the Diaoyu. After Japan threatened to prosecute the captain under domestic Japanese law, the Chinese government not only criticized Japan sharply, but also reportedly restricted the shipment of rare-earth minerals used extensively in Japan's electronics industry. Even after Japan agreed to release the ship's captain and crew, the Chinese Foreign Ministry demanded that Japan issue an apology and pay reparations.¹⁷

Alastair Iain Johnston argues that this series of actions did not, in fact, represent a pattern of newly assertive Chinese behavior.¹⁸ In some cases, as in the announcement of new arms sales to Taiwan and Obama's meeting with the Dalai Lama, China's response did not differ dramatically from past practice.¹⁹ U.S. officials who participated in the March 2010 meeting also denied that China claimed the South China Sea as a "core interest."²⁰ Johnston acknowledges that China took an increasingly assertive approach toward the South China Sea in 2009 and 2010, when its military and paramilitary presence increased. Some of this behavior, however, was a response to attempts by other countries in the region to establish their own territorial claims in the sea, he argues.²¹

¹⁷ Christensen, *The China Challenge*, 256-258.

¹⁸ See for example Alastair Iain Johnston, "How New and Assertive Is China's New Assertiveness?" *International Security* 37, no. 4 (2013).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 15-17.

²⁰ Bader, *Obama and China's Rise*, 77. Cited in *ibid.*, 18 fn31.

²¹ M. Taylor Fravel, "China's Strategy in the South China Sea," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 33 (2011); Michael D. Swaine and M. Taylor Fravel, "China's Assertive Behavior, Part Two: The Maritime Periphery," *China Leadership Monitor* 35 (Summer 2011). Cited in Johnston, "How New and Assertive Is China's New Assertiveness?", 19 fn37.

China's policies on North Korea were similarly reactive. China had not changed its policy toward the peninsula, which called for both sides to refrain from provocative behavior. In the context of North Korea's aggressive actions, however, this policy was tantamount to support for the regime in Pyongyang.²²

Whether China's assertiveness was proactive or reactive, however, it posed similar challenges to the United States and its allies in Asia. Moreover, during this period and later, China seemed to take advantage of provocations in order to strengthen its maritime claims.²³ Several factors may have influenced China's foreign policy during this period, including the desire by Chinese leaders to appear strong in advance of the political transition scheduled for late 2012 and early 2013, an effort by Chinese leaders to take advantage of the Obama administration's offers of strategic reassurance, or, perhaps most importantly, a perception that the United States was in decline following the financial crisis.

The mainstream view in Chinese strategic thinking during this period appeared to be that the financial crisis had weakened the United States, but not sufficiently to alter the unipolar structure of the international system. Multipolarity would arrive eventually, but for now the concept of "one superpower, many great powers" continued to characterize the global distribution of power.²⁴ Beginning in mid-2009, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) School and the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR), the latter a think tank operated by the Chinese Ministry of State Security, held a series of internal conferences to debate the extent of U.S. decline in relative power and whether it afforded opportunities for China to challenge the

²² Johnston, "How New and Assertive Is China's New Assertiveness?", 31.

²³ Christensen, *The China Challenge*, 266.

²⁴ 秦亚青: 《国际体系转型以及中国战略机遇期的延续》, 《现代国际关系》, 2009年第4期 [Qin Yaqing, "The Transformation of the International System and the Continuation of China's Period of Strategic Opportunity," *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* 2009, No. 4]. Cited in Aaron L. Friedberg, *A Contest for Supremacy: China, America, and the Struggle for Mastery in Asia* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2011), 131, 315 n27.

United States. “More moderate voices—those who believed that there had been no major shift in power and that Deng’s axiom of avoiding conflict with the United States remained valid—were not obviously on the defensive in these debates,” Johnston writes.²⁵ Throughout 2009, therefore, Chinese leaders were still debating the extent of U.S. relative decline, and they had not yet concluded that the era of multipolarity had arrived.

Nevertheless, many Chinese analysts perceived that the financial crisis and its aftermath had damaged U.S. power and prestige. In the view of one, the financial crisis had exerted a “comprehensive impact on U.S. hegemony.”²⁶ Another, writing in the *People’s Daily*, argued that “U.S. strength is declining at a speed so fantastic that it is far beyond anticipation.”²⁷ Many Chinese leaders appeared to conclude that China could be gaining ground on the United States faster than expected.²⁸ Some scholars estimated that China’s progress had advanced by five to seven years.²⁹ In the view of other scholars and intelligence officials who were even more optimistic, China might even have leaped ten to twenty years ahead of schedule.³⁰ Under these circumstances, Chinese leaders perceived the opportunity to “advance incrementally.”³¹ As the relative balance of power shifted in their favor, they could press their interests with increasing

²⁵ Johnston, “How New and Assertive Is China’s New Assertiveness?”, 35.

²⁶ 尚鸿：《金融危机对美国霸权地位的冲击》，《现代国际关系》，2009年第4期，第32页 [Shang Hong, “The Impact of the Financial Crisis on the U.S. Hegemonic Position,” *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* 2009, No. 4, 32]. Cited in Friedberg, *A Contest for Supremacy*, 131, 314-315 n22.

²⁷ Li Hongmei, “The U.S. Hegemony ends, the era of global multipolarity enters,” *People’s Daily Online*, February 24, 2009. Cited in Friedberg, *A Contest for Supremacy*, 131, 315 n23.

²⁸ Michael Pillsbury, *The Hundred-Year Marathon: China’s Secret Strategy to Replace America as the Global Superpower* (New York: Henry Holt, 2015), 212.

²⁹ Jin Canrong, cited in Bobo Lo, “The Russia-China-US Triangle and Its Post-Cold War Fate,” in Robert E. Bedeski and Niklas Swanström, *Eurasia’s Ascent in Energy and Geopolitics: Rivalry or Partnership for Russia, China and Central Asia?* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 48, 52 n42.

³⁰ 袁鹏：《国际体系变迁与中国的战略选择》，《现代国际关系》，2009年第11期 [Yuan Peng, “Shifts in the International System and China’s Strategic Options,” *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* 2009, No. 11]. Cited in Bonnie Glaser, “A Shifting Balance: Chinese Assessments of U.S. Power,” in *Capacity and Resolve: Foreign Assessments of U.S. Power* (Washington, DC: CSIS, 2011) and Michael Pillsbury, *The Hundred-Year Marathon: China’s Secret Strategy to Replace America as the Global Superpower* (New York: Henry Holt, 2015), 212, 296 n62.

³¹ Friedberg, *A Contest for Supremacy*, 153-155.

assertiveness. At the same time, they would carefully calibrate the challenges that they mounted in order to ensure that these actions did not result in a sharp rupture in relations with the United States.

By the end of 2010, Chinese leaders recognized that their foreign policy over the previous year had alienated neighboring countries and hurt China's image in the region.³² This was precisely the outcome that China had sought to avoid when it adjusted its strategy in 1996. In advance of President Hu Jintao's visit to the United States, scheduled for January 2011, China took steps to reduce tensions and to improve relations with the United States.³³ In December 2010, State Councilor Dai Bingguo, who also served as secretary-general of the Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group and was generally recognized as China's most influential foreign policy official, published an article reasserting China's commitment to its foreign policy of peace and development.³⁴ During this period, China resumed high-level military exchanges that it had suspended following the arms sale to Taiwan one year earlier, exerted diplomatic pressure on North Korea to cease its provocations against South Korea and to resume negotiations on its nuclear weapons program, and played a more cooperative role in the November 2010 climate change conference in Cancun than it had in Copenhagen.³⁵

Despite these and other constructive steps, China resumed its assertive approach in the following years, most notably through its expansive claims in the South China Sea. The frictions in U.S.-China relations that were associated with China's rise and the changing distribution of

³² Christensen, *The China Challenge*, 246.

³³ Robert G. Sutter, *Chinese Foreign Relations: Power and Policy Since the Cold War*, Third Ed. (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), 150.

³⁴ 《中国国务委员戴秉国：坚持走和平发展道路》，外交部网站，2010年12月06日 [“China State Councilor Dai Bingguo: Adhere to the path of peaceful development,” Foreign Ministry web site], http://www.gov.cn/ldhd/2010-12/06/content_1760381.htm.

³⁵ Sutter, *Chinese Foreign Relations*, 150.

power in the international system, it appeared, would pose a long-lasting challenge. In this process, Russia had the potential to play an important role. The “reset” that the United States and Russia attempted in their relationship during this period therefore had potentially important implications for U.S.-China relations.

The U.S.-Russia reset

In the post-Soviet period, Russia twice attempted a major foreign policy reorientation toward the United States and other Western countries. The first attempt came during the years immediately following the breakup of the Soviet Union, when President Boris Yeltsin and his administration sought to integrate Russia into the West. The second attempt came during the period following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, when President Vladimir Putin sought to trade concessions on several issues for stability in U.S.-Russia relations and U.S. recognition of Russia as an equal partner. Both attempts ended in disappointment. Moreover, both instances of a pro-Western tilt in Russian foreign policy aroused concerns in China but were followed, in the wake of their failure, by Russian diplomatic outreach to China.

The Obama administration’s attempted reset with Russia, by contrast, was a U.S. initiative. Russian leaders viewed the reset as an acknowledgment by the new administration that U.S. policy had been primarily responsible for the deterioration in bilateral relations and therefore required adjustment.³⁶ One U.S. analyst speculated that concerns about China’s rise were a factor in Russia’s receptiveness to the Obama administration’s attempted reset, though he acknowledged that proving this had proven virtually impossible.³⁷ In any case, changes in relative power within

³⁶ Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 212.

³⁷ Andrew Kuchins, “Russia’s China Challenge in a Changing Asia: An American Perspective,” *The Asan Forum* 1:3 (November-December 2013). Alexander Lukin, a leading Russian expert on China, disagreed with this

the U.S.-Russia-China triangle were a source of concern in Russia. Some Russian analysts believed that the proposal for a G-2 involving the United States and China, the world's two largest economies, was directed against Russia's interests.³⁸ Although this proposal never became official U.S. policy, the possibility that the United States and China might play the leading roles in global decision-making, while leaving Russia marginalized, loomed as the worst possible outcome for Russia.³⁹ The prospect of a formal or informal G-2 therefore served as additional motivation for Russia to welcome the Obama administration's outreach. As with the earlier instances of a pro-Western tilt in Russian foreign policy, the attempted reset during Obama's first term raised some issues that were potentially of concern to China, as discussed below.

Vice President Joe Biden announced the reset strategy during a speech at the Munich Security Conference in February 2009. He argued that NATO and Russia should seek cooperation in order to overcome a recent "dangerous drift" in their relations.⁴⁰ As it pursued the reset, the Obama administration faced the challenge of dealing with the "tandem" of Medvedev and Putin. U.S. officials recognized that Putin would continue to wield considerable power, but they hoped that Medvedev's arrival in the Kremlin would make the reset proceed more smoothly. It soon

assessment: "Russia was interested in the reset because in principle we want to have good relations with all countries, including the United States. I think that China was not a factor." Author's interview with Alexander Lukin, Diplomatic Academy of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Moscow, June 3, 2014.

³⁸ Лукин А.В. Россия и Китай сегодня и завтра // Россия и Китай: четыре века взаимодействия—история, Современное состояние и перспективы развития российско-китайских отношений / Под ред. А.В. Лукина. М.: Весь мир, 2013. С. 623 [A.V. Lukin, "Russia and China Today and Tomorrow," in *Russia and China: Four Centuries of Interaction—History, Contemporary Conditions, and Prospects for the Development of Russia-China Relations*, ed. A.V. Lukin (Moscow: Ves' Mir, 2013), 623].

³⁹ Титаренко М.Л. Геополитические значение Дальнего Востока. Россия, Китай и другие страны Азии. Москва. Памятники исторической мысли. 2008. С. 38 [M.L. Titarenko, *The Geopolitical Meaning of the Far East: Russia, China, and Other Countries of Asia* (Moscow: Pamyatniki Istoricheskoi Mysli, 2008), 38].

⁴⁰ Remarks by Vice President Biden at 45th Munich Conference on Security Policy, Munich, Germany, February 7, 2009, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/remarks-vice-president-biden-45th-munich-conference-security-policy>.

became clear that every major decision required Putin's approval, but Obama nevertheless dealt with primarily with Medvedev.⁴¹

Strategic arms control was at the top of the agenda for the reset. The impending expiration dates for existing arms control agreements imposed a sense of urgency, as the 1991 START treaty was set to expire in December 2009, followed by the 2002 SORT agreement in December 2012. The negotiations for New START proved arduous, especially when Russia sought to link the agreement to limitations on U.S. missile defense plans. During the final stage of negotiations, in December 2009, the Russian side abandoned this linkage and agreed to the terms of the treaty. New START, which was to be implemented by February 2018, required both sides to deploy no more than 1,550 strategic warheads and no more than 700 strategic delivery vehicles. The total number of deployed and nondeployed launchers was not to exceed 800. The treaty also included extensive verification measures. For the United States, the treaty ensured significant reductions of Russia's strategic nuclear forces. For Russia, the treaty reaffirmed Russia's great-power status and the importance of arms control negotiations in U.S.-Russia relations.⁴²

As in the past, China supported progress in arms control between the United States and Russia. Following the conclusion of New START, however, some Russian analysts argued that China should participate in future arms control negotiations.⁴³ On this issue, the interests of the United States and Russia might prove to be aligned, at least to some extent.

In contrast with its approach toward Russia, the United States did not view the U.S.-China strategic relationship as one based on mutual deterrence. Indeed, the United States sought to delay

⁴¹ Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 216-217.

⁴² Ibid, 222-224. For the text of the treaty, see Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/140035.pdf>.

⁴³ Арбатов А. Большой стратегический треугольник // Независимое Военное Обозрение. 2.11.2012. [Alexei Arbatov, "The Big Strategic Triangle," *Nezavisimoye Voennoye Obozrenie*, Nov. 2, 2012]; Alexei Arbatov and Vladimir Dvorkin, "The Great Strategic Triangle," Carnegie Moscow Center, April 2013.

or even prevent China's attainment of this status by developing missile defense systems and high-precision weapons. Russia, meanwhile, was also concerned about China's nuclear capabilities, despite its strategic partnership with China. Russia already faced a growing military imbalance in Asia resulting from the growing capabilities of the People's Liberation Army, especially the PLA conventional forces based in northern China. Officially, Russia and China did not acknowledge that mutual deterrence was inherent in their strategic relationship. Nevertheless, as the 2010 Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation hinted, Russia's deterrent capability against a potential Chinese invasion ultimately depended on the country's nuclear forces, including both strategic and tactical nuclear weapons.⁴⁴ If China were to attain the capability to launch nuclear strikes against the European part of Russia, then the credibility of Russia's nuclear deterrent in the Russian Far East would be in doubt.

China consistently argued that it would not participate in arms control negotiations until the United States and Russia first reduced their levels of strategic weaponry to levels that were closer to China's. At the same time, China maintained secrecy about its total number of warheads, which international experts believed to number in the hundreds. In future arms control talks, China's nuclear forces were likely to be on the minds of U.S. and Russian negotiators, whether or not Chinese negotiators were present at the table.⁴⁵

On the issue of missile defense, Obama altered the plans that he inherited from Bush. In September 2009, he cancelled the deployment of ground-based interceptors in Poland and a radar

⁴⁴ Военная доктрина Российской Федерации, 5 февраля 2010 г., http://www.kremlin.ru/ref_notes/461; The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation, approved by Russian Federation presidential edict on February 5, 2010, translated by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 6, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/2010russia_military_doctrine.pdf. Cited in Arbatov and Dvorkin, "The Great Strategic Triangle," 12, 42 n26.

⁴⁵ Арбатов А. Большой стратегический треугольник [Arbatov, "The Big Strategic Triangle"]; Arbatov and Dvorkin, "The Great Strategic Triangle."

facility in the Czech Republic. Instead, he planned to implement a four-phased deployment program, starting with smaller SM-3 interceptors that would be deployed first on ships and later on land, including in Europe. The Obama administration argued that Iran had achieved more success in testing short- and medium-range missiles, which the new system was designed to counter, than in testing long-range missiles, which were the target of the system that the Bush administration had envisioned. The administration insisted that it had not made the decision in response to Russian pressure, and it sought to reassure Poland and the Czech Republic of U.S. support. Medvedev expressed appreciation for Obama's decision.⁴⁶

The United States also sought to achieve agreement between NATO and Russia on a cooperative missile defense program. The NATO-Russia Council discussed this issue during its meeting in November 2010, held alongside the NATO summit in Lisbon.⁴⁷ During this meeting, which Medvedev attended, the council agreed to conduct a threat assessment and to resume cooperation on this issue. Negotiations on a joint NATO-Russia missile defense system continued for the next year, but without achieving results. Russia remained suspicious about U.S. intentions for missile defense. Russian officials were especially concerned that the third and fourth phases of the Obama administration's program could eventually threaten Russia's nuclear deterrent.⁴⁸ In November 2011, Medvedev announced that Russia would withdraw from negotiations on cooperative missile defense. The Russian president repeated his threat to deploy Iskander missiles

⁴⁶ Peter Baker, "White House Scraps Bush's Approach to Missile Shield," *New York Times*, Sept. 17, 2009; Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 226-227.

⁴⁷ For an assessment of these discussions by a Russian expert, see Дворкин В. Перспективы противоракетного сотрудничества США/НАТО и России // Противоракетная оборона: противостояние или сотрудничество? / Под ред. А. Арбатова и В. Дворкина. М.: Московский Центр Карнеги, 2012. С. 192-211 [Vladimir Dvorkin, "Prospects for Counter-Missile Cooperation Between the United States/NATO and Russia," in Alexei Arbatov and Vladimir Dvorkin, eds., *Missile Defense: Confrontation or Cooperation* (Moscow: Moscow Carnegie Center, 2012), 192-211].

⁴⁸ Richard Weitz, "Illusive Visions and Practical Realities: Russia, NATO and Missile Defense," *Survival* 52, no. 4 (August-September 2010): 99-120. Cited in Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 227, 348 n56.

in Kaliningrad, which he had first made the day after Obama was elected, and also warned that Russia might withdraw from New START in the absence of U.S. willingness to limit its missile defense capabilities.⁴⁹

Although China did not publicly raise objections to negotiations on cooperative missile defense between NATO and Russia, some Russian experts believe that China must have been concerned. In their view, China might have perceived a NATO-Russia cooperative missile defense system as an “anti-Chinese conspiracy” that would have damaged China-Russia relations and necessitated a large build-up of Chinese nuclear forces.⁵⁰ During the NATO-Russia negotiations on cooperative missile defense, as Russian security expert Alexei Arbatov explained, the two sides discussed missile defense based on sectors. Under this arrangement, Western countries would have defended Russia against missiles flying over their territory, while Russia would have defended Western countries against missiles flying over its territory. The problem was that neither North Korea nor Iran, the two countries against which the United States and its NATO allies sought to defend themselves from missile attacks, would have fired missiles over Russian territory. Nor, for that matter, would any country targeting Russia have fired its missiles over North America or Europe.

By this logic, the only possible target of a NATO-Russia cooperative missile defense system would have been China. This raised the possibility that Russia might have been obliged to shoot down Chinese missiles aimed at Western countries. China, which was already concerned about the possibility that U.S. national and theater missile defense systems would undermine its nuclear deterrent, naturally would have objected strenuously to such an arrangement. Chinese

⁴⁹ Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 228.

⁵⁰ Арбатов А. Большой стратегический треугольник [Arbatov, “The Big Strategic Triangle”]; Arbatov and Dvorkin, “The Great Strategic Triangle,” 20.

officials did not voice such concerns publicly, but in Arbatov's view, they could not have failed to notice these implications of the NATO-Russia discussions.⁵¹ In any case, the failure of these talks removed these concerns from the agenda of China-Russia relations.

During the period of the reset, Russia also moved closer to the U.S. position on Iran.⁵² In September 2009, U.S. National Security Advisor General James Jones showed his Russian counterpart, Sergei Prikhodko, satellite images of an underground uranium enrichment facility in Qom. Iran had previously maintained the secrecy of this facility's existence, and Russian intelligence had failed to detect it. Afterward, Russia became increasingly willing to impose new sanctions on Iran.⁵³

In June 2010, the UN Security Council approved a fourth round of sanctions on the regime in Tehran. Although the sanctions were less severe than what the United States and EU countries had sought, they were the most stringent to date. They aimed primarily to restrict weapons purchases and financial transactions by the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, which controlled Iran's nuclear program.⁵⁴ Russia also agreed to cancel its \$800 million contract to sell S-300 air defense systems to Iran.⁵⁵ Russia and China both voted for the UN sanctions after making successful efforts to weaken them. As in previous rounds of Security Council debate on Iran's nuclear program, China allowed Russia to take the leading diplomatic role in softening the sanctions. Once Russia agreed to support the sanctions, China lost the diplomatic cover that Russia had provided and would have been diplomatically isolated if it had exercised its veto authority or

⁵¹ Author's interview with Alexei Arbatov, Carnegie Moscow Center, Moscow, June 2, 2016.

⁵² Лукин. Россия и Китай сегодня и завтра. С. 626 [Lukin, "Russia and China Today and Tomorrow," 626].

⁵³ *Putin, Russia, and the West*, BBC documentary, 2012, Part 4; Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 232-233.

⁵⁴ Neil MacFarquhar, "U.N. Approves New Sanctions to Deter Iran," *New York Times*, June 9, 2010.

⁵⁵ Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 219, 233.

otherwise opposed the sanctions.⁵⁶ Despite voting for the sanctions, both Russia and China continued to maintain close economic ties with Iran and to oppose potential military action against the regime in Tehran.⁵⁷

The United States and Russia also achieved important cooperation on Afghanistan. Obama had pledged during his presidential campaign to devote increased resources to military efforts in that country. He dispatched 21,000 additional troops to Afghanistan in March 2009, then announced a surge of 30,000 more troops in December of that year.⁵⁸ Since the beginning of military operations in Afghanistan in the fall of 2001, the United States had supplied its forces primarily along routes passing through Pakistan. As insurgent activity in Pakistan increased, however, the United States sought alternative supply routes.

In early 2009, NATO opened the Northern Distribution Network, which consisted of transport routes passing from Europe across Russia, Central Asia, and the Caucasus before reaching Afghanistan. When Obama and Medvedev met for the first time, in April 2009 ahead of a G-20 summit in London, the Russian president suggested expanding the Northern Distribution Network. When Obama visited Moscow in July 2009 for a summit meeting, he and Medvedev signed an agreement providing for the transportation of both lethal and nonlethal supplies across Russian territory. The United States and Russia also cooperated in efforts to combat the heroin trade, and the U.S. Department of Defense signed a contract to purchase 21 Mi-17 helicopters from Rosoboronexport, the Russian agency responsible for weapons exports, for use in Afghanistan. Despite Russia's concerns about a potential long-term U.S. military presence in Central Asia,

⁵⁶ Dmitri Trenin, "Challenges and Opportunities: Russia and the Rise of China and India," in Ashley J. Tellis, Travis Tanner, and Jessica Keough, eds., *Strategic Asia 2011-12: Asia Responds to Its Rising Powers: China and India* (Seattle and Washington, D.C.: The National Bureau of Asian Research, 2011), 251.

⁵⁷ Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 233-234; Christensen, *The China Challenge*, 277-278.

⁵⁸ Ewen MacAskill, "Obama takes final gamble with Afghanistan troop surge," *The Guardian*, Nov. 30, 2009.

Russian officials continued to perceive an interest in supporting U.S. efforts to stabilize Afghanistan.⁵⁹

The U.S.-Russia reset therefore achieved some important successes during Obama's first term, especially the conclusion of New START and cooperation on Iran and Afghanistan. Within a few years, however, U.S.-Russia relations began to deteriorate once again. This process led Russia to pursue its own "pivot to Asia" and eventually to embrace a closer partnership with China. China was receptive to Russia's diplomatic outreach, especially as U.S.-China tensions over the South China Sea and other issues continued to rise.

Continued cooperation in China-Russia relations

If the U.S.-Russia reset caused concern in China, whether in general or on specific issues such as strategic stability and Iran, Chinese leaders did not voice these concerns publicly. During the period of the reset, China and Russia continued to cooperate on a range of issues. They built the Russia-China oil pipeline spur, continued to discuss cooperation in the natural gas sector, supported each other on issues concerning state sovereignty, and expressed similar views on a range of global issues.

Hu Jintao made an official visit to Russia in June 2010. During this visit, he traveled to Yekaterinburg, where he attended the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit of heads of state, as well as the inaugural summit of heads of state for the BRIC grouping, which consisted of Brazil, Russia, India, and China. South Africa joined the latter grouping in December 2010 to form BRICS. The first BRICS summit was held in Sanya on China's Hainan Island in April 2011. China and Russia held largely convergent interests within BRICS, with both countries seeing the

⁵⁹ Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 219, 230-231.

group as a forum for the expression of the non-Western world's interests. Their points of emphasis differed slightly, however. China viewed the organization primarily as a forum for expanding economic cooperation, while Russia was interested in expanding its agenda to include a broad range of issues, including security.⁶⁰ For Russia, the inclusion of India was also a way to balance China's influence in this organization.

China and Russia also cooperated on issues concerning state sovereignty, whether their own or that of other countries. In July 2009, Russia supported China's response to the outbreak of ethnic violence between Uighurs and ethnic Han Chinese in Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang. Russia, along with the other SCO countries, approved a declaration stating that the unrest was "purely China's internal affair" and supporting China's efforts to "restore order in the region."⁶¹

China and Russia held common views on the revolutions that erupted in the Arab world starting in late 2010. Unlike Western leaders and media organizations, they did not refer to this wave of revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Syria as an Arab "spring." They perceived these revolutions much as they had viewed the "color revolutions" a few years earlier, namely as threats to domestic stability within sovereign states that threatened to spill into the surrounding region. The convergence of their views toward the Arab Spring, which reflected overlap in their national identities, promoted a further strengthening of the China-Russia relationship.⁶² Russia worried about the international consequences and the potential loss of its own influence in the Middle East,

⁶⁰ Лукин А.В. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. Россия и Китай после распада СССР // Россия и Китай: четыре века взаимодействия—история, Современное состояние и перспективы развития российско-китайских отношений / Под ред. А.В. Лукина. М.: Весь мир, 2013. С. 370-371 [A.V. Lukin, "From Normalization to Strategic Partnership. Russia and China After the Collapse of the USSR," in *Russia and China: Four Centuries of Interaction—History, Contemporary Conditions, and Prospects for the Development of Russia-China Relations*, ed. A.V. Lukin (Moscow: Ves' Mir, 2013), 370-371].

⁶¹ Alexander Cooley, *Great Games, Local Rules: The New Great Power Contest in Central Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 83.

⁶² Gilbert Rozman, *The Sino-Russian Challenge to the World Order: National Identities, Bilateral Relations, and East Versus West in the 2010s* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2014), 245, 274.

as well as the possibility that the turbulence could spread to its own Muslim regions. China was concerned about the wave of revolutions spreading to Xinjiang.⁶³ During Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi's visit to Russia in May 2011, he and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov agreed to coordinate their countries' positions toward the revolutions. The basis of their common stance was the principle that each state should determine its own fate, without outside interference.⁶⁴ China and Russia worked out their common position over the next few weeks and voted together on a series of resolutions in the UN Security Council pertaining to the Arab revolutions.⁶⁵

Prior to the meeting between the foreign ministers, China and Russia had already voted together on resolutions concerning Libya, but they eventually concluded that they were mistaken in their approach. On February 26, 2011, China and Russia both voted in favor of Resolution 1970, which imposed sanctions on Muammar Gaddafi's regime. On March 17, they abstained on Resolution 1973, which established a no-fly zone. China and Russia later concluded that NATO's subsequent air strikes in Libya overstepped the UN mandate. This experience influenced their approach toward Syria in the months that followed. As Syria's civil war intensified, China and Russia cooperated to protect Bashar Al-Assad's regime from Security Council sanctions.⁶⁶ In

⁶³ Лукин. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 354-355 [Lukin, "From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 354-355].

⁶⁴ Стенограмма выступления и ответа на вопрос СМИ министра иностранных дел России С.В. Лаврова в ходе совместной пресс-конференции по итогам встречи с министром иностранных дел Китая Ян Цзечи, Москва, 6 мая 2011 г. 06.05.2011 г. [Transcript of the speech and answers to media questions by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov in the course of a joint press conference on the results of his meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi, Moscow, May 6, 2011], http://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/208126. Цит. по: Лукин. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 354 [Cited in Lukin, "From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 354].

⁶⁵ Lavrov described the common position of Russia and China in an article in *People's Daily*. See Статья министра иностранных дел России С.В. Лаврова в газете «Женьминь Жибао», 15 июля 2011 г. [Article by Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov in the *People's Daily* newspaper, July 15, 2011], http://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/199886. Цит. по: Лукин. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 355 [Cited in Lukin, "From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 355].

⁶⁶ Лукин. От нормализации к стратегическому партнерству. С. 355-356 [Lukin, "From Normalization to Strategic Partnership, 355-356].

October, China and Russia vetoed a Security Council resolution that would have raised the possibility of sanctions on Syria but would not actually have imposed them.⁶⁷ This was to be the first of several such votes on Syria. Disagreements over the Syrian civil war became one of the issues that contributed to the demise of the U.S.-Russia reset.

The end of the U.S.-Russia reset

In September 2011, Medvedev and Putin announced that they intended to switch roles once again. Putin would stand as the United Russia party's presidential candidate during the March 2012 presidential election. Earlier, Russia had amended its constitution, extending each presidential term to six years. This meant that Putin, following his return to the presidency, could remain in office continuously until 2024. In the December 2011 parliamentary elections, United Russia lost dozens of seats but maintained a large majority in the Duma. After both domestic and international observers reported that the elections were tainted by fraud, large crowds gathered in central Moscow to protest both the election results and Putin's plan to return to the presidency.⁶⁸ Putin accused Secretary of State Hillary Clinton of inciting the protests by criticizing the integrity of the elections. "She set the tone for some actors in our country and gave them a signal," Putin said. "They heard the signal and with the support of the U.S. State Department began active work."⁶⁹ Putin also accused Clinton of paying the demonstrators, which she denied.⁷⁰ Putin was determined to prevent the emergence in Russia of anything resembling the earlier "color

⁶⁷ Neil MacFarquhar, "U.N. Resolution on Syria Blocked by Russia and China," *New York Times*, Oct. 4, 2011.

⁶⁸ Ellen Barry, "Rally Defying Putin's Party Draws Tens of Thousands," *New York Times*, Dec. 10, 2011.

⁶⁹ David M. Herszenhorn and Ellen Barry, "Putin Contends Clinton Incited Unrest Over Vote," *New York Times*, Dec. 8, 2011.

⁷⁰ Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 246.

revolutions” or the Arab Spring. In March 2012, Putin won the presidential election with more than 63 percent of the vote.

From the time of the outbreak of the Syrian civil war in 2011, Russia consistently sought to protect the Assad regime from international pressure. The Assad regime was Russia’s last remaining ally in the Arab world. Russia also maintained a naval base in Tartus, Syria, though its operations were of only minor significance. If the Assad regime were to collapse, then Russia might suffer a loss of its influence in the Middle East. Putin warned that if the Assad regime fell, its successor might be an Islamist regime that would spread radicalism throughout the region. This radicalism might even reach Russia’s own Muslim populations. Russia therefore blocked all proposals for sanctions, support for Syria’s opposition forces, and calls for international military intervention that arose in the UN Security Council.⁷¹

Other issues also contributed to the decline of the reset. In December 2012, Obama signed legislation repealing the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, thereby enabling the establishment of permanent normal trading relations between the United States and Russia. At the same time, however, he signed into law the Magnitsky Act, which imposed penalties on Russia over alleged human rights violations.⁷² The act was named for Sergei Magnitsky, a Russian lawyer who had uncovered evidence of a large tax fraud scheme carried out by law enforcement and tax collection officials as part of an attack on Hermitage Capital, the brokerage firm for which he worked. Magnitsky later died in prison, allegedly after being denied medical care and beaten. The Magnitsky Act denied visas to Russians connected with Magnitsky’s death, froze their U.S. assets,

⁷¹ Ibid, 249-250.

⁷² Doug Palmer, “Obama signs trade, human rights bill that angers Moscow,” *Reuters*, Dec. 14, 2012.

and allowed the names of other alleged human rights abusers to be added to the list in the future. Russia responded by banning U.S. adoptions of Russian children.⁷³

The next year, Russia agreed to accept Edward Snowden, a contractor for the U.S. National Security Agency who had leaked large troves of classified documents to WikiLeaks. After leaving the United States, Snowden first flew to Hong Kong. The Chinese authorities soon decided not to allow him to stay, but Snowden contacted Russian diplomats in Hong Kong and was soon on a plane to Moscow, where he arrived on June 23. After weeks of negotiations, Russia decided to grant temporary political asylum to Snowden. The United States responded by cancelling the U.S.-Russia summit that was planned for Moscow in September and was to be held just before the G-8 meeting in St. Petersburg. Obama called for a “pause” in U.S.-Russia relations.⁷⁴ The downturn in U.S.-Russia relations during the summer of 2013, coming just after the June 2013 Sunnylands summit between Obama and Xi, may have rekindled Russian concerns about a G-2 world order that would marginalize Russia.⁷⁵

The United States and Russia quickly re-engaged diplomatically over Syria, however. In September 2013, Obama considered ordering air strikes against the Assad regime for its chemical weapons attack the previous month, which killed 1,400 people. Obama ultimately scrapped this plan, instead accepting a Russian proposal to ensure that Syria’s chemical weapons would be removed or destroyed by the middle of 2014.⁷⁶ Despite this deal, U.S.-Russia tensions over Syria continued for many years afterwards. The bilateral relationship had soured considerably since the

⁷³ Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 252.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 269-270.

⁷⁵ Andrew Kuchins, “Putin’s U.S. Card in the China-Russia-U.S. Triangle,” *Russia Direct*, June 27, 2013, <http://www.russia-direct.org/analysis/putin%E2%80%99s-us-card-china-russia-us-triangle>; Kuchins, “Russia’s China Challenge in a Changing Asia.”

⁷⁶ Michael R. Gordon, “U.S. and Russia Reach Deal to Destroy Syria’s Chemical Arms,” *New York Times*, Sept. 14, 2013.

early days of the reset. It was now on the verge of another crisis, this time in Ukraine, that would cause the relationship to plunge to yet another post-Cold War low.

Managing turbulence in U.S.-China relations

As the U.S.-Russia reset lost momentum and tensions between Washington and Moscow began to rise, the U.S.-China relationship endured both friction and signs of promise. Although China appeared in late 2010 to pull back from its assertive foreign policy of the previous two years, signs of assertiveness soon returned. This tendency was apparent in both the South China Sea and the East China Sea. China also prepared for its leadership transition, with Xi Jinping set to become Secretary General of the Chinese Communist Party in November 2012 and President of the People's Republic of China in March 2013. Xi's first foreign visit as China's new leader, in March 2013, was to Russia, signaling the importance that China attached to this relationship. Just over two months later, however, Obama hosted Xi for wide-ranging talks at the Sunnylands estate in California.

China's 2012 dispute with the Philippines over Scarborough Shoal signaled a continuation of China's assertive diplomacy in the South China Sea. In April, the Philippines dispatched a naval vessel to arrest Chinese fishermen for hunting giant clams and other endangered species, in violation of Philippine law, in waters surrounding the disputed territory. China responding by sending its own maritime surveillance ships that were patrolling the area to prevent the fishermen's arrest. The Chinese vessels sealed the mouth of the shoal's lagoon and prevented further entry by ships from the Philippines. As the standoff grew more intense, the United States engaged both sides diplomatically. In June, the United States brokered a deal that was supposed to require both sides to withdraw. The Philippines withdrew its forces, but the Chinese forces remained in place.

During that summer's ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), China succeeded in preventing the body from taking a stand against China's behavior.

As part of its effort to divide ASEAN, China provided investment and assistance to Cambodia, the host of that summer's AFR. Because of its divisions over the South China Sea, the ARF that year failed, for the first time in its history, to issue a joint communiqué. China's victory in this episode seemed to offer a model for asserting its interests and territorial claims. Under this approach, China could mount challenges to rival claimants, often in response to their provocations, at a sufficiently low level of intensity that the United States was unlikely to respond militarily.⁷⁷ China used similar tactics in July 2012, when it announced the formation of Sansha City, a new city government structure in Hainan Province, to which it assigned jurisdiction over the Spratly Islands, Paracel Islands, and Macclesfield Bank, all of which are territories that China claims in the South China Sea.⁷⁸

During the fall of 2012, China-Japan tensions once again rose over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. In September, Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda decided that the government would purchase the islands from the Japanese family that owned them privately. Noda's intent was to prevent the purchase of the islands by right-wing organizations. China, however, accused Japan of trying to change the status quo by "nationalizing" the islands. Anti-Japanese protests erupted throughout China, and China-Japan relations deteriorated.⁷⁹

During this period, China sought Russia's firm backing in its maritime disputes but was largely disappointed in Russia's stance. In seeking Russia's support, China noted that both countries had territorial disputes with Japan. Nevertheless, Russia maintained neutrality on China's

⁷⁷ Ely Ratner, "Learning the Lessons of Scarborough Reef," *The National Interest*, Nov. 21, 2013, <http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/learning-the-lessons-scarborough-reef-9442>.

⁷⁸ Christensen, *The China Challenge*, 261.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 262.

maritime and territorial disputes. Russian leaders did not wish to be drawn into these disputes, in which they perceived no vital interest. Dai Bingguo appealed for Russia's support during a visit to Moscow in August 2012, but he failed to secure the desired support. Instead, Russia pursued a possible settlement of its territorial dispute with Japan and strengthened ties with Vietnam during this period, as discussed below.⁸⁰

Despite these continued areas of tension in U.S.-China relations, the Obama administration hoped to forge a strong relationship with new Chinese President Xi Jinping. In June 2013, just three months after the National People's Congress selected Xi as president, Obama hosted Xi at Sunnylands. During this summit, the two leaders agreed that they would seek to prevent the U.S.-China relationship from descending into a new Cold War or a dangerous confrontation between an established superpower and a rising challenger. They disagreed on issues such as cyberespionage and China's claims in the South China Sea but discussed ways to manage these disagreements. Xi suggested that China would seek to rein in the excessively provocative behavior of North Korea's young leader, Kim Jong-un. Xi proposed that the United States and China attempt to forge a "new type of great-power relationship."⁸¹

The Sunnylands summit offered grounds for optimism about the future of U.S.-China relations. However, Xi Jinping refused to back down on China's maritime claims during this summit. Later in 2013, China declared an air defense identification zone (ADIZ) in the East China Sea. China's policies toward its maritime territorial claims would grow increasingly assertive, especially when China began building and militarizing artificial islands in the South China Sea.

⁸⁰ Rozman, *The Sino-Russian Challenge to the World Order*, 267.

⁸¹ David E. Sanger, "Obama and Xi Try to Avoid a Cold War Mentality," *New York Times*, June 9, 2013; "America and China: The summit," *The Economist*, June 8, 2013.

China-Russia Relations on the Eve of the Ukraine Crisis

Russia debates its China policy

As the U.S.-Russia reset lost momentum and relations with the West began to sour, Russia considered its foreign policy options in Asia. Soon after the Obama administration announced its pivot to Asia, Russia began to explore its own pivot to the region. In September 2012, Russia hosted the annual Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Vladivostok, a Pacific port city in the Russian Far East. This was the first time that Russia had hosted an APEC summit. In an op-ed published in advance, Putin wrote of his country's intention to capitalize on the Asia-Pacific's dynamism in order to increase shipment of goods through Russian territory between Europe and Asia and to stimulate the development of Siberia and the Russian Far East.⁸² Putin praised the state of Russia's relations with China, asserting that the bilateral relationship was at an "unprecedented high level."⁸³ At the same time, Russia sought to expand ties to other Asian countries. During the summit, Gazprom and Japan signed a contract to build a multibillion-dollar transfer station to increase Russian gas exports to Japan.⁸⁴ The next year, during the June 2013 St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, Putin announced that Russia would seek to stimulate its economy by expanding economic ties with Asia.⁸⁵ In 2013, Japan activated its diplomacy toward Russia, raising hopes that the two countries might be able to settle their territorial dispute over the Kuril Islands.⁸⁶

⁸² Vladimir Putin, "An Asia-Pacific Growth Agenda," *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 6, 2012.

⁸³ David M. Herszenhorn, "Putin's Ambitions Turn to the Far East," *New York Times*, Sept. 6, 2012.

⁸⁴ David M. Herszenhorn and Steven Lee Myers, "For Putin, a Flight of Fancy at a Summit Meeting's Close," *New York Times*, Sept. 9, 2012.

⁸⁵ Fiona Hill and Bobo Lo, "Putin's Pivot: Why Russia Is Looking East," *Foreign Affairs*, July 31, 2013, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russian-federation/2013-07-31/putins-pivot>.

⁸⁶ "Japan-Russia Relations—I," *The Asan Forum*, July 19, 2013, <http://www.theasanforum.org/abes-visit-to-moscow-can-it-become-the-beginning-of-an-end/>.

Russia's plans for its own pivot to Asia provoked many questions, including whether or not Russia had the capacity to pursue such a policy successfully, as well as the proper balance that it should seek in its portfolio of relationships in Asia. These questions were directly related to the domestic debate on Russia's policy toward China. Broadly speaking, the mainstream debate on Russia's China policy fell into three main camps: a group wishing to strengthen relations with China in order to confront the West, a Western-oriented group favoring Russia's participation in the international community, and a group favoring balanced relations featuring strong ties with China matched by good relations with other countries in Asia and around the world.⁸⁷ Outside of the mainstream, some critics called for an alliance with China or, on the contrary, argued that Russia should reverse its recent strategic rapprochement with China and instead prepare to address an imminent Chinese threat.

The group favoring closer relations with China in order to confront the West centered on the Institute of the Far East and its longtime director, Mikhail Titarenko, who died in 2016.⁸⁸ Titarenko argued that Russia's unique geography, history, and culture required the country to maintain balance in its relations between East and West. In his view, the "hegemonistic" actions of the United States, including NATO expansion and the Kosovo war, required Russia to enlist China's support, not to form an "anti-American front," but to resist such unilateralist tendencies

⁸⁷ For two similar descriptions of competing schools of thought in Russia regarding policy toward China, see Gilbert Rozman, "Russian Perception of Sino-Russian Relations," Review Article, *The Asian Forum*, July 19, 2013, <http://www.theasianforum.org/russian-perceptions-of-sino-russian-relations/> and Зевелев И.А. Реализм в XXI веке: Американо-китайские отношения и выбор России. // Россия в Глобальной Политике. 27 декабря 2012 г. [Igor Zevelev, "Realism in the 21st century: American-Chinese Relations and Russia's Choice," *Rossiia v Global'noi Politike*, Dec. 27, 2012].

⁸⁸ For some of his last works, see Титаренко М.Л. Геополитическое значение Дальнего Востока. [Mikhail Titarenko, *The Geopolitical Meaning of the Far East*]; Титаренко М.Л. Россия и ее азиатские партнеры в глобализирующемся мире. М.: Форум, 2012 [Mikhail Titarenko, *Russia and its Asian Partners in a Globalizing World* (Moscow: Forum, 2012)]; Титаренко М.Л. Россия и Китай. Стратегическое партнерство и вызовы времени. М.: Форум, 2014 [Mikhail Titarenko, *Russia and China: Strategic Partnership and the Challenges of the Time* (Moscow: Forum, 2014)].

in U.S. foreign policy.⁸⁹ Although Titarenko and most other advocates of this position stopped short of calling for a military alliance with China, some analysts in this camp argued that such an alliance was necessary. For example, Anatoly Klimenko, a retired general, argued that Russia and China should form an alliance within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization for the purpose of resisting the spread of Western influence in Central Asia.⁹⁰

Representative of the group supporting Russia's deep engagement in the international community were analysts such as Dmitri Trenin of the Carnegie Moscow Center and Vasily Mikheev of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations.⁹¹ Trenin argued that Russia not only would have to abandon imperialism, but also lacked the capacity to pursue a foreign policy of multipolarity and strategic independence. Those advocating the latter course, who often considered themselves to be Eurasianists, argued that Russia should respond to humiliation at the hands of the West by re-establishing its leading role in post-Soviet territories, especially within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and form alliances with China, India, and Iran. In this way, Russia could establish itself as an independent center of power in a multipolar world.

In Trenin's view, however, Russia lacked the economic strength to play this role. Indeed, Russia's most serious attempt to pursue such a course, which Yevgeny Primakov had led during his tenure as foreign minister and prime minister, demonstrated its futility. Trenin argued instead that Russia, while conducting a policy of openness in the Asia-Pacific region designed to

⁸⁹ Титаренко. Геополитическое значение Дальнего Востока. С. 6-7, 27, 336-337 [Titarenko, *The Geopolitical Meaning of the Far East*, 6-7, 27, 336-337].

⁹⁰ Клименко А.Ф. Стратегия развития Шанхайской организации сотрудничества: проблемы обороны и безопасности. М.: ИДВ РАН, 2009 [A.F. Klimenko, *Strategy for the Development of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Problems of Defense and Security* (Moscow: Institute of the Far East, 2009)].

⁹¹ See Trenin's works cited below and Михеев В.В. Китай-Япония: Стратегическое соперничество и партнерство в глобализирующемся мире. М.: ИМЭМО, 2009. [Vasily Mikheev, *China-Japan: Strategic Rivalry and Partnership in a Globalizing World* (Moscow: IMEMO, 2009)].

encourage the development of Siberia and the Russian Far East, should follow a pro-Europe course and aim to become part of Greater Europe.⁹² The largely pro-Western orientation of analysts such as Trenin and Mikheev grew increasingly marginalized over time. However, Trenin later argued that Russia's status as a "Euro-Pacific power" still required careful attention to both the East and the West. The EU remained Russia's most important resource for modernization, though Russia also had no choice but to maintain good relations with China.⁹³

Another viewpoint, the one closest to Russia's official policy in recent years, held that Russia should build close relations with China while attempting to maintain balance in its foreign policy, both at the global level and in the Asia-Pacific region. Two scholars advocating this view were Yevgeny Bazhanov and Alexander Lukin, the rector and vice-rector respectively of the Diplomatic Academy of Russia. Both are China specialists.

Bazhanov argued that Russia had grounds to view China as a long-term, reliable partner. Both countries required stability along their 2,600-mile border, and both sought to resist what they considered U.S. hegemony.⁹⁴ Russia should cooperate with China in seeking to establish a multipolar world, which would induce restraint in U.S. foreign policy, Bazhanov argued. At the same time, Russia should maintain balance in its foreign policy, both in the international system as a whole and in the Asia-Pacific region in particular. Russia had the opportunity to build close relations with all Asian countries. For example, because of Japan's concerns about China's rise,

⁹² Dmitri Trenin, *The End of Eurasia: Russia on the Border Between Geopolitics and Globalization* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2001), 314-316, 319-320.

⁹³ Dmitri Trenin, *Post-Imperium: A Eurasian Story* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2011), 240-242.

⁹⁴ Бажанов Е. Не бойтесь китайского дракона // Независимая газета. 2.8.2013 [Yevgeny Bazhanov, "Don't Fear the Chinese Dragon," *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, Aug. 2, 2013].

Russia could improve relations with Japan even without resolving the territorial dispute over the Kuril Islands.⁹⁵

Bazhanov rejected several alternative policy options, including the formation of an alliance with China, attempts to balance against China, or efforts to instigate regional conflict. China would reject proposals for an alliance because its security and economic growth depended on continued cooperation with the United States, while an alliance would be perilous for Russia because the country would risk unnecessary involvement in China's conflicts in Asia.⁹⁶ Nor should Russia, which requires cooperation with its giant neighbor, respond favorably to any potential efforts by the United States to enlist Russia in a balancing coalition against China.⁹⁷ Equally mistaken would be attempts, in the words of a Chinese expression, to "sit on the mountain and watch the tigers fight."⁹⁸ This strategy, in which Russia would seek advantage by waiting for other actors in the Asia-Pacific region to exhaust each other through conflict, would harm Russia's interests by undermining regional security and economic prosperity.⁹⁹

Lukin expressed similar views, arguing that Russia required good relations with China both for economic and strategic reasons, but should also seek balance in its foreign policy. In Lukin's view, Russia could leverage its relations with China in order to strengthen its own position as an independent center of power in the international system.¹⁰⁰ At the same time, Russia should seek

⁹⁵ Бажанов Е. Россия в Азиатско-Тихоокеанском регионе // Международная Жизнь. 2013 г. — № 8. 2013. — С. 53-54 [Yevgeny Bazhanov, "Russia in the Asia-Pacific Region," *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn'* 2013 (8): 53-54].

⁹⁶ Бажанов. Россия в Азиатско-Тихоокеанском регионе. С. 53 [Bazhanov, "Russia in the Asia-Pacific Region," 53]; Бажанов. Не бойтесь китайского дракона [Bazhanov, "Don't Fear the Chinese Dragon"]; Евгений Бажанов. Что ждет Россию на Востоке // Независимая газета. 2.9.2013 [Yevgeny Bazhanov, "What Awaits Russia in the East," *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, Sept. 2, 2013].

⁹⁷ Бажанов Е. Лучше дружить с Китаем, а не против его. 14 февраля 2011 г. [Yevgeny Bazhanov, "It's Better to Make Friends With China, Not Against It," *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, Feb. 14, 2011]; Бажанов. Что ждет Россию на Востоке [Bazhanov, "What Awaits Russia in the East"].

⁹⁸ The expression is 座山观虎斗 (*zuo shan guan hu dou*).

⁹⁹ Бажанов. Россия в Азиатско-Тихоокеанском регионе. С. 52 [Bazhanov, "Russia in the Asia-Pacific Region," 53-52]; Бажанов. Не бойтесь китайского дракона. [Bazhanov, "Don't Fear the Chinese Dragon"].

¹⁰⁰ Лукин. Россия и Китай сегодня и завтра. С. 630-631 [Lukin, "Russia and China Today and Tomorrow," 630-631].

balance by strengthening relations with other global actors, including the United States, the European Union, and India, as well as with actors in the Asia-Pacific region, including Japan, South Korea, and the ASEAN countries.¹⁰¹

In some cases, such a course could cause tension in China-Russia relations. For example, China reacted somewhat warily to improving relations between Russia and Vietnam during this period, which included the sale of Russian submarines to Vietnam and Russia-Vietnam energy cooperation. China was especially concerned about potential cooperation between Russian and Vietnamese companies in the development of offshore oil and gas resources, though Russia promised not to carry out any such activities in territories disputed by China and Vietnam. China also closely monitored the possibility of the Russian navy's return to Cam Ranh Bay, which Medvedev discussed during his visit to Vietnam in November 2012. However, Lukin argued that China was likely to view a Russian naval presence at the base as preferable to the emerging U.S. naval presence there.¹⁰² He cited an editorial in China's *Global Times* arguing that a potential Russian naval presence at Cam Ranh Bay would create complications but ultimately would increase China's room for maneuver in the region.¹⁰³ This issue, in Lukin's view, helped to illustrate why the proper course for Russia was to develop constructive relations with all of the

¹⁰¹ Лукин А.В. Китайская мечта и будущее России // Россия в Глобальной Политике. 19.6.2010 [Alexander Lukin, "The Chinese dream and the future of Russia," *Russia in Global Politics*, June 19, 2010].

¹⁰² Лукин А.В. Нация и воинственный дух // Россия в Глобальной Политике. 1.5.2013 [Alexander Lukin, "The Nation and the Warlike Spirit," *Rossiia v Global'noi Politike*, May 1, 2013]; Иванов А.В., Лукин А.В. Активизация внешней политики Китая в АТР и интересы России // Актуальные Проблемы Современной Мировой Политики. Ежегодник ИМИ. Институт Международных Исследований (ИМИ). Москва: Издательство «МГИМО-Университет» 2013. С. 164-166 [Andrei Ivanov and Alexander Lukin, "The Activation of China's Foreign policy in the Asia-Pacific Region and Russia's Interests," in *Contemporary Problems of Modern World Politics*, Annual Volume of the Institute for International Research (Moscow: MGIMO University, 2013), 164-166].

¹⁰³ 李剑: 《俄重返金兰湾, 未必是坏事》, 《环球时报》, 2012年11月27日 [Li Jian, "Russia's return to Cam Ranh Bay isn't necessarily a bad thing," *Huanqiu Shibao*, November 27, 2012]. Цит. по Иванов, Лукин. Активизация внешней политики Китая в АТР и интересы России. С. 165-166 [Cited in Ivanov and Lukin, "The Activation of China's Foreign Policy in the Asia-Pacific Region and Russia's Interests," 165-166].

countries of the Asia-Pacific region while refraining from taking a position on their territorial disputes.¹⁰⁴

Lukin's advocacy of a balanced portfolio of relations in the Asia-Pacific region stemmed partly from his long-term concerns about China's trajectory. In particular, he expressed concern about the potential for growing nationalism in China. In the aftermath of the financial crisis, he noted, several books with strong nationalistic themes were published in China. Among the arguments made in these books were that the United States sought to encircle China and that China should increase its military presence overseas in order to secure natural resources.¹⁰⁵ Although these arguments contradicted the official position of foreign policy restraint that China had adopted under Deng Xiaoping, they appeared to represent the opinions of many members of China's elite, especially in the military. If such opinions were to gain ascendance in China's future foreign policy, then many surrounding countries, including Russia, would have cause for grave concern. Although this scenario remained hypothetical, it suggested that Russia would be wise to cultivate other partners in Asia and around the world.¹⁰⁶ The tension between efforts to maintain good relations with China and the desire to strengthen relations with other countries in Asia, which was apparent

¹⁰⁴ Иванов, Лукин. Активизация внешней политики Китая в АТР и интересы России. С. 165-166 [Cited in Ivanov and Lukin, "The Activation of China's Foreign Policy in the Asia-Pacific Region and Russia's Interests," 165-166].

¹⁰⁵ See for example the following: 宋晓军, 黄纪苏, 宋强, 李仰: 《中国不高兴: 大时代, 大目标及我们的内忧外患》, 南京, 江苏人民出版社, 2009 年 [Song Xiaojun, Huang Jisu, Song Qiang, Li Yang, *China is Unhappy: A Great Era, Great Goals, and Our Internal Trouble and Outside Aggression* (Nanjing: Jiangsu Press, 2009)]; 刘明福: 《后美国时代的大国思维: 中国梦》, 北京, 中国友谊出版, 2010 年 [Liu Mingfu, *Great Power Thinking of the Post-American Era: The Chinese Dream* (Beijing: Zhongguo Youyi Press, 2010)]; 戴旭: 《C 型包围—内忧外患下的中国突围》, 山海, 文江出版社, 2010 年 [Dai Xu, *C-Shaped Encirclement—China's Breaking out of the Siege under Internal Trouble and Outside Aggression* (Shanghai: Wenjiang Chubanshe, 2010)]. Цит. по: Лукин А.В. Россия и Китай сегодня и завтра. С. 630-631 [Cited in Lukin, "Russia and China Today and Tomorrow," 630-631].

¹⁰⁶ Лукин. Китайская мечта и будущее России [Lukin, "The Chinese dream and the future of Russia"].

both in Russia's official policy and in the policy recommendations of analysts such as Bazhanov and Lukin, seemed unlikely to disappear in the near future.¹⁰⁷

Although their views were well outside of the mainstream, Russian analysts such as Alexander Khramchikhin believed that the China threat was already apparent and growing. Khramchikhin argued that China, beset by domestic problems including overpopulation, land shortage, and scarce resources, eventually would invade Russia and seize large swathes of land in Siberia and the Russian Far East.¹⁰⁸ In 2009, China conducted military exercises simulating a large-scale land invasion, which in Khramchikhin's view could only have been a dress rehearsal for an attack on Russia.¹⁰⁹ Although Khramchikhin considered a Chinese invasion of Russia to be virtually inevitable, he believed that it would occur only after the PRC had first regained *de facto* control of Taiwan. Khramchikhin acknowledged that his views were well outside of the mainstream in Russia, but he said that he expected them to gain support in the coming years.¹¹⁰

Despite the lack of mainstream support in Russia for such views, Russian military planners appeared to devote increasing attention to the contingency of a Chinese land invasion.¹¹¹ China's 2009 military exercise, called Stride-2009, stimulated a discussion in the Russian media of the potential threat from China. The Russian military also responded, both in doctrine and in

¹⁰⁷ Rozman, "Russian Perception of Sino-Russian Relations."

¹⁰⁸ Храмчихин А. Дракон проснулся? Внутренние проблемы Китая как источник китайской угрозы для России. Издательский Дом «Ключ-С», 2013. [Alexander Khramchikhin, *Has the Dragon Awoken? China's Domestic Problems as a Source of a Chinese Threat to Russia* (Key-C Publishing House, 2013)].

¹⁰⁹ Храмчихин А. Старые основы новой доктрины // Военно-промышленный курьер. № 6. 17 февраля 2010 г. [Alexander Khramchikhin, "The Old Foundations of a New Doctrine," *Voyenno-promyshlenniy kur'yer* 6, Feb. 17, 2010]; Храмчихин. Дракон проснулся? С. 65-66 [Khramchikhin, *Has the Dragon Awoken?*, 65-66].

¹¹⁰ Author's interview with Alexander Khramchikhin, Moscow, May 22, 2014.

¹¹¹ Stephen Blank, "Recent Trends in Russo-Chinese Military Relations," in *Eurasia's Ascent in Energy and Geopolitics: Rivalry or Partnership for Russia, China and Central Asia?*, ed. Robert E. Bedeski and Niklas Swanström (New York: Routledge, 2012) 108-134.

exercises.¹¹² As mentioned previously in this chapter, Russia's 2010 Military Doctrine, for the first time in the post-Cold War era, hinted at a potential military threat from China.¹¹³

In June and July of 2010, the Russian military conducted the biennial Vostok (East) military exercises in the Siberian and Far Eastern military districts. Army General Nikolai Makarov, the Chief of the General Staff and commander of the exercises, insisted that the exercises were not aimed at "any one country or bloc." However, given the exercises' geographical setting, participating forces, and simulated operations, outside experts argued that the true purpose was to test the Russian military's ability to defend the country's eastern regions against a potential Chinese invasion.¹¹⁴ On the final day of the exercises, the Russian military appeared to simulate a tactical nuclear strike against enemy forces. The exercise may have sought to determine how long Russian conventional forces could withstand an invasion by the PLA before resorting to the use of nuclear weapons.¹¹⁵ Given the rapid buildup of PLA capabilities and the sharp reductions in military power deployed in Russia's eastern regions since the late Soviet era, the defense of Siberia and the Russian Far East ultimately depended on the large-scale use of nuclear weapons, which Russia would have to use in the early stages of military action.¹¹⁶

Subsequent episodes also revealed Russia's concerns about China's growing power. During the summer of 2012, China sent a large icebreaker, the Snow Dragon, on an expedition to

¹¹² Blank, "Recent Trends in Russo-Chinese Military Relations," 113-114.

¹¹³ Военная доктрина Российской Федерации, 5 февраля 2010 г. [The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation, Feb. 5, 2010]. Cited in Arbatov and Dvorkin, "The Great Strategic Triangle," 12, 42 n26.

¹¹⁴ Roger McDermott, "'Virtual' Defense of the Russian Far East: Vostok 2010," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Volume 7, Issue 129, July 6, 2010, <https://jamestown.org/program/virtual-defense-of-the-russian-far-east-vostok-2010/>; Jacob W. Kipp, "Vostok 2010 and the Very Curious Hypothetical Opponent," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Volume 7, Issue 133, July 12, 2010, <https://jamestown.org/program/vostok-2010-and-the-very-curious-hypothetical-opponent/>.

¹¹⁵ Roger McDermott, "Reflections on Vostok 2010: Selling an Image," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Volume 7, Issue 134, July 13, 2010, <https://jamestown.org/program/reflections-on-vostok-2010-selling-an-image/>.

¹¹⁶ Кашин В. Сумма всех страхов. Россия в Глобальной Политике. 1 мая 2013 г. [Vasily Kashin, "The sum of all fears," *Rossiia v Global'noi Politike*, May 1, 2013]; Jacob W. Kipp, "Russia's Nuclear Posture and the Threat that Dare Not Speak its Name," in Stephen J. Blank, ed., *Russian Nuclear Weapons: Past, Present, and Future* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2011), 459-503.

the Arctic region. As the Snow Dragon sailed through the Sea of Okhotsk, Russia launched military exercises in the region, including tests of anti-ship missiles on nearby Sakhalin Island. The following summer, immediately following the conclusion of joint China-Russia naval exercises, five Chinese warships departed from the site of the exercises and entered the Sea of Okhotsk. They sailed south of Sakhalin, through the Kurils, and then in a circle around Japan before returning home. Although the Chinese ships remained in international waters throughout their journey, Russia responded swiftly. Just hours after the Chinese ships entered the Sea of Okhotsk, Putin called snap military exercises in the region. He flew to Chita, a city along the border with China, and to Sakhalin to observe the maneuvers, which were Russia's largest land and sea exercise in the region since the end of the Cold War. The Chinese ships' entry into the Sea of Okhotsk appeared to energize Russia-Japan diplomacy throughout the rest of 2013.¹¹⁷

On the eve of the Ukraine crisis, therefore, Russia was attempting a delicate balancing act. The Russian leadership continued to cultivate China as a partner, especially as relations with the United States soured. At the same time, Russia worried about the implications of China's growing power and tried to maintain a balanced portfolio of relations with other powers in Asia and around the world. When the Ukraine crisis arose, this balance became increasingly difficult to maintain. Meanwhile, on the eve of the Ukraine crisis, Chinese analysts also debated their country's relationship with Russia.

¹¹⁷ Fiona Hill, "Gang of Two: Russia and Japan Make a Play for the Pacific," Brookings Institution, Nov. 27, 2013, <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/gang-of-two-russia-and-japan-make-a-play-for-the-pacific/>.

Xi Jinping's first trip abroad as president was to Moscow, underscoring the priority that China placed on relations with Russia. Xi made this visit in March 2013, just eight days after he ascended to the presidency of the PRC. During this visit, the two countries discussed the construction of a gas pipeline from Russia to China, as well as Russian sales of Su-35 fighter jets and Amur-class submarines to China. Xi proposed that China and Russia continue to cooperate in protecting "national sovereignty, security and development interests."¹¹⁸ The desirability of close relations with Russia in the framework of a "strategic partnership," rather than a military alliance, remained the consensus among China's foreign policy elite.

With Russia and China both experiencing tension in their relations with the United States, however, a growing number of voices in China during this period called for an alliance with Russia. Zhang Wenmu, a scholar in Beijing, argued that China and Russia, both of which faced strategic pressure from the United States, should at least consider upgrading their relationship to an alliance. The purpose of such an alliance, he argued, would be to defend the postwar international structure established during the Yalta Conference. From China's standpoint, the most important objective was to prevent Japan's remilitarization.¹¹⁹

The most prominent voice in China making a case for alliance with Russia was Yan Xuetong, a leading international relations scholar at Tsinghua University in Beijing.¹²⁰ He argued that the structure of the international system was becoming bipolar, with the United States and

¹¹⁸ David M. Herszenhorn and Chris Buckley, "China's New Leader, Visiting Russia, Promotes Nations' Economic and Military Ties," *New York Times*, March 22, 2013; David Lague, "China eyes \$3.5 billion Russian arms deal despite ire over Sukhoi copy," *Reuters*, March 27, 2013.

¹¹⁹ 张文木：《中俄结盟的限度，目标和意义》，《社会观察》，2012年，第3期，第84-87页 [Zhang Wenmu, "The Limits, Objectives, and Meaning of a China-Russia Alliance," *Shehui GuanCha*, 2012 (3): 84-87].

¹²⁰ The following section draws upon Brian G. Carlson, "China-Russia Relations and the Inertia of History," *Survival* 58, no. 3 (June/July 2016): 213-222.

China as the two poles. Under these circumstances, China needed allies, and it had no better strategic option than Russia. Yan laid out his case for an alliance with Russia in a 2012 article titled “Is Russia Reliable?”¹²¹ He fleshed out his view of the emerging world order, including the need for a China-Russia alliance, in his 2013 book *Inertia of History: China and the World in the Next Ten Years*.¹²²

As of 2013, Yan wrote, the structure of the international system was still unipolar.¹²³ Yet the trend toward bipolarity was unmistakable, and by 2023, bipolarity most likely would be an established fact.¹²⁴ In public statements, including joint declarations with Russia, Chinese leaders often expressed their desire for the formation of a multipolar world. The reasoning for this position, from China’s standpoint, was that in a world of several great powers, China would face less strategic pressure from the United States than if it were the sole challenger to the U.S. position.¹²⁵ Yan quoted Deng Xiaoping, who declared in 1990 that China would be satisfied with a world of three, four, or five great powers.¹²⁶

In Yan’s view, those in China who were expecting the emergence of multipolarity rather than a rapid transition to bipolarity were likely to be surprised. China was on track to become a major power, despite the inevitable slowdown in its rate of economic growth. By contrast, other candidates for great-power status, including Russia, Japan, and Europe, were all likely to be weaker in 2023 than they had been ten years earlier. Each would be reduced to the status of a

¹²¹ 阎学通：《俄罗斯可靠吗？》，《国际经济评论》2012年，第3期 [Yan Xuetong, “Is Russia Reliable?” *Guoji Jingji Pinglun*, 2012 (3), 21-25]

¹²² 阎学通：《历史的惯性：未来十年的中国与世界》，中信出版社，2013年 [Yan Xuetong, *Inertia of History: China and the World in the Next Ten Years* (Beijing: Zhongxin Chubanshe, 2013)].

¹²³ Ibid, 27.

¹²⁴ Ibid, 34.

¹²⁵ Author’s interview with Da Wei, director of the Institute of American Studies, China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations, Beijing, April 24, 2015.

¹²⁶ 见阎学通：《历史的惯性：未来十年的中国与世界》，第87页 [See Yan Xuetong, *Inertia of History*, 87].

regional power, with little global influence.¹²⁷ In the dying days of the Soviet Union, Deng predicted that Russia would always be one of the world's leading powers, even if it were to lose the other Soviet republics.¹²⁸ By 2013, Yan wrote, it was clear that this prediction was wrong.¹²⁹

In a bipolar world, Yan argued, China would have to abandon its policy of non-alignment. Deng originally proclaimed this strategy in 1982, when China began to pull away from a close alignment with the United States and to explore improved relations with the Soviet Union. The policy of non-alignment was rational during the late Cold War years, Yan writes, when China was not one of the superpowers in the bipolar structure.¹³⁰ Under these circumstances, China could strengthen its bargaining position through non-alignment. It made sense to continue this policy in the era of unipolarity that followed the Soviet Union's collapse, when China's power lagged far behind that of the United States. In 1990, Deng also admonished China to "bide your time and hide your capabilities" (*taoguang yanghui*).

In the emerging bipolar structure, however, the old logic would no longer hold. New circumstances would cause China to reconsider both the non-alignment strategy and the "bide your time and hide your capabilities" maxim.¹³¹ Two factors would force China to change its strategy, namely U.S. rebalancing toward Asia and the attitudes of neighboring countries toward China's rise. These two factors were closely related. In the emerging U.S.-China competition, Yan argued, the United States would have a distinct advantage because it boasted dozens of allies, including several in Asia, whereas China lacked even one ally in the full sense of the term.¹³²

¹²⁷ 阎学通：《历史的惯性：未来十年的中国与世界》，第 87 页 [Yan Xuetong, *Inertia of History*, 87].

¹²⁸ 《邓小平文选》第三卷，第 353 页，见阎学通：《历史的惯性：未来十年的中国与世界》，第 87 页 [Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping, Vol. 3 (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 1993), 353. Quoted in Yan Xuetong, *Inertia of History*, 87].

¹²⁹ 阎学通：《历史的惯性：未来十年的中国与世界》，第 87-88 页 [Yan Xuetong, *Inertia of History*, 87-88].

¹³⁰ Ibid, 29.

¹³¹ Ibid, 30.

¹³² Ibid, 27-28.

In the coming U.S.-China strategic competition, friends would be especially important. This competition, Yan wrote, would not be a repeat of the Cold War, which was a struggle for world leadership featuring military buildups, proxy wars, ideological conflict, and severely restricted economic and cultural links. Instead, the United States and China would engage in a mixture of competition and cooperation. They would compete in the political and military spheres, but their competition was likely to be regional rather than global and was unlikely to erupt into war. Meanwhile, they would continue to seek economic cooperation, to enjoy strong cultural connections, and to avoid an overarching ideological dispute. In short, bipolarity would not automatically mean a new Cold War.¹³³

If the U.S.-Soviet confrontation was like a boxing match, with violence as a regular feature, Yan wrote, then the U.S.-China competition would be more like a soccer match, in which limbs would occasionally collide but violence would not be the main form of competition. U.S.-China relations would be primarily a team competition in which the objective was to win the support of other countries. China would have to win friends in order to ensure political support for its rise. This, in turn, would require China to consider forming alliances.¹³⁴

Under these circumstances, China had no better strategic option than alliance with Russia. China's overtures to Russia were likely to receive a warm reception because Russia also had no better option than China. In the existing international environment, China and Russia had no possibility of joining the West because the United States could not accept China and Russia as allies. If the United States were to let Russia join NATO, then the European countries would no longer trust the reliability of the U.S. security guarantee. Likewise, if the United States were to

¹³³ Ibid, 34-35.

¹³⁴ Ibid, 31-32.

accept China as an ally, then U.S. allies in Asia would no longer believe that the United States would protect them. Both NATO and the U.S. alliance system in Asia would collapse.¹³⁵

Far from slackening, U.S. strategic pressure (*zhanlue yali*) on both China and Russia was likely to increase by 2023, Yan wrote. As the United States sought to reduce its commitments in the Middle East, it would attempt to strengthen its positions in Europe and Asia. U.S. opposition to the domestic and foreign policies of Russian President Vladimir Putin, who appeared likely to remain in office until 2024, would ensure continued tension in U.S.-Russia relations, while U.S. efforts to protect its position in Asia against a rising China would mean turbulence in U.S.-China relations as well. China and Russia both feared that the United States would attempt to arouse domestic opposition within their countries.¹³⁶

For China, alliance with Russia would become increasingly attractive as China assumed its No. 2 position in the world and expanded its global interests.¹³⁷ Alliance with Russia would ensure the stability of China's northern and western border regions, allowing China to focus on areas of strategic tension to the south and east. It would also prevent China from becoming isolated in the UN Security Council. Moreover, because China would be the stronger alliance partner, it would enjoy greater influence in the alliance than Russia.¹³⁸

For Russia, alliance with China also would have great value. Yan argued that Russia would continue to be more concerned about Western pressure than the growing power gap with China. The period during which Russian leaders and public opinion considered it unacceptable that China's power should outstrip Russia's had already passed. The "China threat theory" and fears of unrestrained Chinese immigration into the Russian Far East had also subsided. In the future, the

¹³⁵ 阎学通：《俄罗斯可靠吗？》，第 23 页 [Yan Xuetong, "Is Russia Reliable?", 23].

¹³⁶ Ibid, 24.

¹³⁷ Ibid, 23-24.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 25.

desire to harness China's economic power in order to promote Russian domestic development would become a mainstream view.¹³⁹ Alliance with China would allow Russia to strengthen its position in the Asia-Pacific region, though Russia would have to accept China's growing influence in Central Asia.¹⁴⁰

Some Chinese critics, citing both the collapse of the Sino-Soviet alliance of the early Cold War era and Russia's erratic behavior in recent years, argued that Russia would not be a reliable ally. Yet the nature of a China-Russia alliance in the present environment, Yan countered, would ensure Russia's reliability. Relations among allies are different from relations among friends, he noted. Friendships are based on emotional connections, but alliances are based on interests. If the members of an alliance share significant mutual security interests, then they will be reliable allies, regardless of disagreements on other issues or their general feelings toward each other.¹⁴¹

In some crucial respects, a new China-Russia alliance would be different from the Sino-Soviet alliance of the 1950s. In the earlier alliance, the Soviet Union sought to play the role of "big brother" to China's "little brother," a relationship that China would not accept. At present, even though China's comprehensive national power was rapidly outstripping Russia's, Russia remained a first-rank military power, thus ensuring that a China-Russia alliance would be relatively equal in military terms.¹⁴²

During the period of Cold War alliance, the Soviet Union and China both sought to promote communism throughout the world. A new alliance, by contrast, would be a defensive alliance for the purpose of resisting outside strategic pressure and preventing the worsening of both countries'

¹³⁹ 阎学通：《历史的惯性：未来十年的中国与世界》，第 97 页 [Yan Xuetong, *Inertia of History*, 97].

¹⁴⁰ 阎学通：《俄罗斯可靠吗？》，第 24 页 [Yan Xuetong, "Is Russia Reliable?", 24]; 阎学通：《历史的惯性：未来十年的中国与世界》，第 98-99 页 [Yan Xuetong, *Inertia of History*, 98-99].

¹⁴¹ 阎学通：《俄罗斯可靠吗？》，第 21-22 页 [Yan Xuetong, "Is Russia Reliable?", 21-22].

¹⁴² Ibid, 25.

strategic environments. As Yan noted, studies in behavioral psychology had found that people were more determined to prevent loss than to increase gains. Therefore, a defensive alliance would be more reliable than an alliance devoted to worldwide ideological expansion.¹⁴³ In addition to shared interests, Yan wrote, China and Russia had built a large reserve of strategic trust from their cooperation in recent years. They enjoyed greater strategic trust with each other than with other great powers. By 2023, he predicted, this would still be true.¹⁴⁴

Yan's Chinese critics also argued that forming an alliance with Russia could stimulate a new U.S.-China Cold War or allow Russia to drag China into wars that were not in China's interests. Yan argued, however, that the overall power positions of the United States and China, not outside factors such as Russia, would determine the nature of U.S.-China bipolarity. For example, the 2001 China-Russia treaty and the formation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization that same year did not heighten the structural contradictions between the United States and China, but the financial crisis that began in 2008 did. Moreover, Russia had fought a series of wars in the post-Soviet era, but none had required support from China or any other outside power. In the near future, Russia was unlikely to wage a war that would require military support from China.¹⁴⁵

Yan's arguments aroused widespread opposition within the scholarly community, both among foreign policy generalists and among experts on Russia. Jiang Yi, an expert on Russia with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing, called the suggestion of forming an alliance with Russia "irresponsible." During the post-Soviet era, China and Russia had never based their relations primarily on opposing the United States, he argued. Rather, the main driving force was

¹⁴³ Ibid, 24].

¹⁴⁴ 阎学通:《历史的惯性:未来十年的中国与世界》,第100页[Yan Xuetong, *Inertia of History*, 100].

¹⁴⁵ 阎学通:《俄罗斯可靠吗?》,第25页[Yan Xuetong, "Is Russia Reliable?" *Guoji Jingji Pinglun*, 25].

the desire of both countries to become “good neighbors” in order to avoid the tensions of the past and to pursue mutual gain. The international environment was important, but only in a secondary role. Many of the common objectives that China and Russia pursued, including regional stability and increased economic exchange, had little connection with the United States. Even the aims of opposing hegemony and promoting multipolarity were not equivalent to opposing the United States. If China and Russia were to pursue an anti-U.S. alliance, they would risk the onset of a new Cold War and the loss of many benefits that their bilateral relationship produces.¹⁴⁶

Another powerful critique of Yan’s argument came from Zhao Huasheng, an expert on Russia and Central Asia at Fudan University in Shanghai.¹⁴⁷ Zhao argued that Yan’s analysis contained several mistaken judgments about the nature of alliances, the costs and benefits of an alliance with Russia, and Russia’s own willingness to join an alliance.

The formation of a military alliance entails a serious commitment. It requires the alliance partners to form a united position on security and to support each other militarily if war breaks out. China and Russia simply were not prepared for such a commitment, Zhao argued. The 2001 Treaty of Good-Neighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation included a clause that falls short of a mutual security guarantee but requires bilateral consultations in the event of a security crisis involving either country. China and Russia have never invoked this clause, neither in any of Russia’s wars in former Soviet territory nor during any of China’s crises with neighbors involving territorial disputes. After Russia’s war with Georgia in 2008, China declined to join Russia in recognizing the sovereignty of two breakaway regions, Abkhazia and South Ossetia. China traditionally has

¹⁴⁶ 姜毅：《不靠谱的‘中俄结盟’说》，《世界知识》，2012年第5期，第52-53页 [Jiang Yi, “Irresponsible talk of ‘China and Russia forming an alliance,’” *Shijie Zhishi* 2012 (5): 52-53].

¹⁴⁷ 赵华胜：《中俄结盟为何缺乏现实可行性》，《人民论坛》，2013年7月24日 [Zhao Huasheng, “Why a ‘China-Russia Alliance’ Lacks Realistic Feasibility, *Renmin Luntan*, July 24, 2013], <http://www.rmlt.com.cn/2013/0724/91927.shtml>。

made the preservation of state sovereignty a pillar of its foreign policy and has no desire to set a precedent that could encourage Taiwan's independence or jeopardize Beijing's rule over Xinjiang and Tibet.

In any alliance, the members have two main worries, namely being abandoned or drawn into a war by their ally. In a potential China-Russia alliance, Zhao argued, both concerns would be acute. Yan's assumption that Russia would not wage a war requiring China's military support was imprudent, Zhao argued, because it would mean preparing from the outset not to honor a promise. If unforeseen circumstances were to lead either partner to break a promise of military support, the consequences could be tragic.

Calls for an alliance with Russia also displayed a misunderstanding of Russia's thinking, Zhao argued. Despite Yan's insistence that Russia had no better strategic option than to form an alliance with China, Russia seemed not to think this way. Russia clearly sought increased cooperation with China. However, as discussed above, both the leadership and the scholarly community, including many scholars who are friendly toward China, consistently argued against alliance with China. The notion that Russia would be content to serve as the junior partner in an alliance that was increasingly lopsided in China's favor misunderstood Russia's mentality, Zhao argued.

Russia also had good reason to avoid involvement in any U.S.-China confrontation, a point that both government officials and analysts reiterated regularly. The notion that Russia would "pull China's chestnuts out of the fire" in the course of a U.S.-China confrontation, Zhao wrote, was unrealistic. Russia maintained neutrality on China's territorial disputes in the South China Sea and the East China Sea. China had sought to form a united front with Russia in both countries' island disputes with Japan, but Russia, seeing the disputes as separate, demurred. In any case, the two

disputes are fundamentally different in structure, considering that Russia controls the disputed Kuril Islands, whereas Japan controls the Senkaku Islands. Even if China and Russia were to form an alliance, they would continue to act according to their own national interests. In practice, this would mean that China would stand aloof from Russia's conflicts in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, while Russia would maintain neutrality on China's maritime disputes.

Ultimately, Zhao argued, China and Russia could achieve all of the purported benefits of an alliance through their existing relationship, which they called a strategic partnership, without incurring the costs and risks of an alliance. Without forming an alliance, China and Russia could still maintain solidarity in the UN Security Council and provide mutual support in opposing what they viewed as undue U.S. strategic pressure. They could also avoid the inevitable disappointments and resentment that would result from an alliance in which aspirations for unity outstripped reality.¹⁴⁸ Despite the interest aroused by Yan Xuetong's arguments, the Chinese leadership appeared unlikely to accept his recommendations for the foreseeable future, as Yan himself acknowledged.¹⁴⁹ Soon, however, events would push Russia into a closer embrace, though still not an alliance, with China.

¹⁴⁸ 赵华胜：《中国崛起对俄罗斯是威胁吗？》，《际问题研究》2013年，第2期，第31页 [Zhao Huasheng, "Is China's Rise a Threat to Russia?" *Guoji Wenti Yanjiu* 2013 (2): 31.]

¹⁴⁹ Author's conversation with Yan Xuetong at the University of Zurich, March 6, 2018.

The Ukraine Crisis and Its Aftermath

The Ukraine crisis

In late 2013, a dispute about the future orientation of Ukraine gathered force, developing into a crisis that exploded early the following year. As a result of this conflict, U.S.-Russia relations fell to yet another post-Cold War low. The crisis also led to a new stage in China-Russia relations.

In the run-up to the crisis, competing visions for Ukraine's orientation, whether toward Euro-Atlantic structures or toward Russia, became irreconcilable. Russia ultimately concluded that Ukraine's attempts to build closer relations with the European Union were incompatible with Putin's developing vision for Russian-led Eurasian integration. Putin introduced his plans on this subject during the fall of 2011, as he prepared for his return to the presidency. In 2010, Russia, Kazakhstan, and Belarus had formed a customs union. The following year, after announcing his intention to return to the Kremlin, Putin revived an older proposal by Nursultan Nazarbaev, the president of Kazakhstan, to create the Eurasian Economic Union.¹⁵⁰ Putin sought to create a new center of power in Eurasia.¹⁵¹ His primary goal was to create a new Russian-led "pole" in a multipolar world.¹⁵² This would enable Russia to resist any further encroachments of Euro-Atlantic structures into the territories of the former Soviet Union. Putin hoped to strengthen the union by integrating Ukraine, which had the second-largest economy among post-Soviet countries, trailing

¹⁵⁰ Путин В. Новый интеграционный проект для Евразии – будущее рождается сегодня. Известия. 3 октября 2011 г. [Vladimir Putin, "A new integration project for Eurasia—the future is being born today," *Izvestia*, Oct. 3, 2011].

¹⁵¹ Alexander Lukin, "Eurasian Integration and the Clash of Values," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 56:3, 54.

¹⁵² Stephen Blank, "The Intellectual Origins of the Eurasian Union Project," in *Putin's Grand Strategy: The Eurasian Union and Its Discontents*, ed. S. Frederick Starr and Svante Cornell, 14-28 (Washington, D.C.: Central-Asia Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, 2014).

only Russia itself. Ukraine's heavy industrial sector, which was centered in the eastern part of the country, was still closely integrated into Russia's own military-industrial complex.¹⁵³

Viktor Yanukovych, who had lost the 2004 presidential election that gave rise to the Orange Revolution, was elected president of Ukraine in 2010 following several years of ineffective governance by the victorious forces in that revolution. Two months after he was elected, Yanukovych extended Russia's lease on the naval base at Sevastopol, Crimea, the home of Russia's Black Sea Fleet, until 2042. The lease had been set to expire in 2017. He also stated that Ukraine would remain neutral and not seek NATO membership.¹⁵⁴ Although Russia had regarded him as its favored candidate, Yanukovych remained noncommittal about joining the Eurasian Economic Union. Meanwhile, he began negotiations on an Association Agreement and free trade agreement with the European Union. Previously, Russia had been most concerned about Ukraine's potential membership in NATO and had taken a relaxed attitude toward the prospect of closer Ukrainian ties with the EU. In the fall of 2013, however, the Russian government concluded that the proposed upgrading of Ukraine's relationship with the EU would have harmed Russia-Ukraine economic ties and precluded Ukrainian membership in the Eurasian Union.¹⁵⁵

Russia soon began to impose economic pressure on Ukraine in an effort to deter the country from signing an agreement with the EU. Among other measures, it blocked the delivery of Ukrainian goods by truck to Russia. These efforts appeared to succeed. In November, Yanukovych announced the suspension of negotiations with the EU. Soon afterward, Russia announced that it would loan \$15 billion to Ukraine, which was suffering a deep economic crisis and facing the possibility of default on government debt. Yanukovych's decision to withdraw from negotiations

¹⁵³ Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 286-287.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 236, 291.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 287.

with the EU prompted mass protests in Kyiv's Maidan Square. The protestors, most of whom came from the central and western parts of Ukraine, composed a diverse coalition of liberals, nationalists, and other forces. Through visits by Assistant Secretary of State for Europe Victoria Nuland and other U.S. officials, the United States demonstrated its support for the Maidan protestors. Russian officials accused the United States of masterminding the demonstrations. They also seized upon the presence of some far-right forces among the protestors to label the movement "fascist." The protests continued from late 2013 into early 2014, punctuated by sporadic police violence against the demonstrators.¹⁵⁶

After violence erupted on February 19 and 20, the foreign ministers of Germany, France, and Poland, as well as Vladimir Lukin, a former Russian ambassador to the United States, convened in Kyiv to negotiate an agreement among Yanukovych and Ukrainian opposition forces. On February 21, the Ukrainian president signed an agreement with the opposition leaders that was intended to resolve the crisis. The signatories agreed to move the presidential elections forward to December 2014, conduct constitutional reform, and commission an independent investigation into the violence on Maidan. That very night, however, Yanukovych fled Kyiv, possibly to avoid capture and harm at the hands of opposition forces. He eventually arrived in Rostov, Russia. The Ukrainian parliament, the Rada, quickly moved the presidential election forward to May 25 and granted amnesty to protestors whom Yanukovych's government had accused of violence during the Maidan movement. Russia accused a "fascist junta" of the unconstitutional ouster of a democratically elected president.¹⁵⁷

Russia soon moved to exact a price for the overthrow of Yanukovych's government. Putin ordered surprise military exercises along Ukraine's border. Hundreds of troops bearing no insignia,

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 288-289.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 289-290.

who became known as “little green men,” then poured into Crimea, occupying municipal buildings in Sevastopol, raising the Russian flag above them, and warning the Ukrainian government not to intervene. Russia quickly organized a referendum in Crimea, which was held on March 16. The Russian government claimed that 96 percent of voters cast their ballots in favor of Crimea’s unification with Russia. Putin announced Russia’s annexation of Crimea during a speech at the Kremlin on March 18.¹⁵⁸ He justified the annexation as an effort to protect the population of Crimea, more 60 percent of which was ethnic Russian, from a hostile government in Kyiv. Putin also reportedly was concerned that the new Ukrainian government would evict the Russian Black Sea Fleet from Sevastopol. Russia quickly consolidated its control over the peninsula, and Ukraine stood little chance, for the foreseeable future, of regaining it.¹⁵⁹

Russia’s actions triggered strong international criticism, however. The annexation violated the 1994 Budapest memorandum, in which Ukraine had agreed to give up its nuclear weapons and the other signatories, namely Russia, the United States, and Britain, had agreed to recognize and uphold Ukraine’s territorial integrity. Most countries refused to recognize Russia’s annexation of Crimea, and the United Nations General Assembly voted to condemn it. The G-8 suspended Russia’s membership. The United States imposed sanctions on Russians who were involved in the annexation and barred several Russian government officials and businessmen, including chief of the presidential administration Sergei Ivanov and Rosneft CEO Igor Sechin, from entering the United States.¹⁶⁰ In addition to their economic impact, the sanctions complicated Russia’s efforts to maintain balance in its foreign policy toward Asia. Japan, under pressure from the United States,

¹⁵⁸ Обращение Президента Российской Федерации, 18 марта 2014 г. [Address by the President of the Russian Federation, March 18, 2014], <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603>.

¹⁵⁹ Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 291-292.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 292-293.

agreed to comply with the sanctions. Partly as a result, momentum toward a possible resolution of the Kuril Islands dispute stalled.¹⁶¹

During this period, as during the war in Georgia, China offered Russia only limited diplomatic support. In March 2014, China abstained from two votes in the United Nations that were critical of Russia's actions, rather than joining Russia in vetoing them. On March 15, the day before the referendum in Crimea was held, the UN Security Council debated a resolution condemning the referendum. Russia's veto ensured that the resolution would fail, but China declined to join Russia in vetoing the measure, instead opting to abstain. As in the case of Georgia, China was concerned about setting a precedent that would weaken the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states and grant legitimacy to separatist movements. China remained concerned about the implications for Taiwan, Tibet, and Xinjiang. At the same time, China supported Russia's position that outside forces had instigated the Maidan movement and that the overthrow of the Yanukovych government was illegitimate. "China has always respected the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states," said Liu Jieyi, the Chinese ambassador to the UN. "At the same time, we have noticed foreign interference is also an important reason leading to violent clashes on the streets of Ukraine," the ambassador said, adding that "we condemn and oppose all violent acts."¹⁶² On March 27, China also abstained from a UN General Assembly resolution condemning the annexation of Crimea as illegal. This resolution passed with 100 votes in favor, 11 votes against, and 58 abstentions.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ Кистанов В.О. Проблемы треугольника Россия–Китай–Япония и полуостров Крым // Независимая Газета. 31 марта 2014 г. [Valery Kistanov, "Problems in the Russia-China-Japan Triangle and the Crimean Peninsula," *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, March 31, 2014].

¹⁶² David M. Herszenhorn, Peter Baker and Andrew E. Kramer, "Russia Seizes Gas Plant Near Crimea Border, Russia Says," *New York Times*, March 15, 2014; Mirjam Donath, "Russia vetoes U.N. resolution against Crimea referendum," *Reuters*, March 15, 2014.

¹⁶³ Somini Sengupta, "Vote by U.N. General Assembly Isolates Russia," *New York Times*, March 27, 2014.

Soon after the annexation of Crimea, a separatist insurgency arose in eastern Ukraine. Once again, “little green men” entered the region and took over local government offices. The insurgents’ strongholds were in the cities of Donetsk and Lugansk, which they declared to be the “Donetsk People’s Republic” and the “Lugansk People’s Republic.” Despite Russia’s insistence that the insurgents were operating independently, they were in fact armed and financed by the Russian government. The insurgents sought to prevent the new government in Kyiv from gaining control of Ukraine’s eastern regions and to reunite these territories with Russia. Ukrainian military forces at times made advances against the insurgents, but Russia sent sufficient military equipment to prevent their defeat. On May 25, Petro Poroshenko was elected as Ukraine’s new president. Soon after his election, he signed the EU Association Agreement. The insurgency in the east, however, served Russia’s purpose of ensuring that Ukraine could not join NATO or become a full member of the EU.¹⁶⁴

Fighting raged throughout the summer of 2014. In July, a passenger airliner traveling from the Netherlands to Malaysia was shot down in the skies over eastern Ukraine, killing all 298 people on board. U.S. officials offered evidence that the insurgents, most likely incorrectly identifying the airplane as a military craft, shot it down with a BUK anti-aircraft missile that Russia had supplied. Russian officials insisted that the Ukrainian military had shot down the plane. The United States responded by imposing additional, far-reaching sanctions. Capital flight from Russia accelerated, and the ruble lost about half of its value in 2014. In September, Russia and Ukraine agreed to a ceasefire during negotiations in Minsk, Belarus.¹⁶⁵ Fighting continued in the years that followed, however, and even in the best-case scenario, the situation in Ukraine seemed likely to remain a “frozen conflict” for many years to come.

¹⁶⁴ Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 295-296.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 297-300.

In the wake of the Ukraine crisis, subsequent events caused a further deterioration in U.S.-Russia relations. In September 2015, Russia launched a military intervention in Syria aiming to bolster the Assad regime. The competing objectives of the United States and Russia in Syria's civil war caused ongoing tension, and the possibility that an accident or miscalculation could bring U.S. and Russian military forces into direct conflict was a major concern. Russia's alleged interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election caused a major scandal in the United States and made the prospect of improved U.S.-Russia relations seem exceedingly unlikely for the foreseeable future. All of this turbulence in U.S.-Russia relations occurred during a period in which China continued to increase its foreign policy assertiveness.

China claims greater world role under Xi Jinping

Upon assuming the leadership of China, Xi Jinping made several moves in an effort to lay the groundwork for China to play an increasingly prominent role in the world. As with Putin's return to the presidency of Russia, which heralded a period of renewed assertiveness in Russian foreign policy, Xi's assumption of power in China was a factor that encouraged the strengthening of China-Russia ties.¹⁶⁶ Under Xi's leadership, China continued its recent pattern of foreign policy assertiveness in its maritime disputes, most notably by claiming an air defense identification zone (ADIZ) in the East China Sea, towing an oil rig into disputed waters off the coast of Vietnam, and by constructing artificial islands in the South China Sea and the installation of military infrastructure and equipment on some of them. Under Xi's leadership, China also began to develop initiatives and to create institutions that could underpin China's claim to world leadership in the future. These included the Belt and Road initiative to build infrastructure across the Eurasian

¹⁶⁶ Rozman, *The Sino-Russian Challenge to the World Order*, 250-251.

continent and in maritime domains, the Silk Road Fund to finance many of these projects, the creation of the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank, and participation in the BRICS Development Bank.

In November 2013, China announced the creation of an ADIZ in the East China Sea that covered sea and islands that Japan also claimed, including the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. The Chinese ADIZ overlapped with an ADIZ that Japan had established in 1969. China's implementation of the zone meant that aircraft entering the area would be required to identify themselves and provide their flights plans to Chinese authorities. China insisted that the zone would not impede commercial air traffic through the area, but the U.S. and Japanese governments protested China's decision. They argued that the establishment of the zone could increase the risk of accidents or miscalculations leading to conflict.¹⁶⁷ Days later, two U.S. B-52 bombers flew through the contested airspace, without following the procedures insisted upon by China, as a show of resolve.¹⁶⁸

In May 2014, a dispute arose between China and Vietnam after the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC), a Chinese state-owned energy company, sent an oil drilling rig into waters that Vietnam claimed as its own. CNOOC stationed the rig 120 nautical miles off the Vietnamese coast and 17 nautical miles from the disputed Paracel Islands. Vietnam sent ships into the area to contest the Chinese oil rig's presence. Both sides accused the other's ships of ramming their own, and Chinese authorities acknowledged the use of water cannons in an effort to force the Vietnamese ships to disperse. Violent riots against China's actions also broke out in Vietnam. The placement of the oil rig off Vietnam's coast was among the most assertive steps that

¹⁶⁷ Chris Buckley, "China Claims Air Rights Over Disputed Islands," *New York Times*, Nov. 23, 2013.

¹⁶⁸ Julian E. Barnes and Jeremy Page, "U.S. Sends B-52s on Mission to Challenge Chinese Claims," *Wall Street Journal*, Nov. 27, 2013; Thom Shanker, "U.S. Sends Two B-52 Bombers Into Air Zone Claimed by China," *New York Times*, Nov. 26, 2013.

China had taken to strengthen its maritime claims in the region.¹⁶⁹ In July, China removed the rig from the region, perhaps having proven its point that it could make such moves with near impunity.

China also sought to bolster its territorial claims in the South China Sea by building artificial islands. In November 2014, satellite images showed that China had built an island about 9,850 feet long and 985 feet wide on Fiery Cross Reef in the disputed Spratly Islands. This island, located 500 miles from the Chinese mainland, would be capable of hosting a runway for military aircraft and a harbor that would be large enough to dock warships.¹⁷⁰ The next year, satellite images demonstrated that China, beginning in January 2015, dredged large volumes of sand and deposited it on top of Mischief Reef, thereby transforming this coral reef into an island. Pentagon officials accused China of attempting to strengthen its territorial claims in the region by creating “facts on the water.” Admiral Harry Harris, the commander of the Pacific Fleet, said that China was creating a “great wall of sand.”¹⁷¹ These efforts continued in the following years, as China calculated that it could proceed incrementally without encountering serious resistance.

In addition to its continued assertiveness in maritime disputes, China also advanced initiatives that could set the stage for a potentially enhanced world role in the near future. In September 2013, during a speech in Astana, Kazakhstan, Xi called for the creation of a Silk Road Economic Belt. Under this project, China would finance the construction of infrastructure from its own territory across the Eurasian continent to Europe and the Middle East.¹⁷² The following month, during a speech in Jakarta, Xi proposed the corresponding Maritime Silk Road for the 21st Century,

¹⁶⁹ Jane Perlez and Rick Gladstone, “China Flexes Its Muscles in Dispute With Vietnam,” *New York Times*, May 8, 2014.

¹⁷⁰ Jane Perlez, “China Said to Turn Reef Into Airstrip in Disputed Water,” *New York Times*, Nov. 23, 2014.

¹⁷¹ David E. Sanger and Rick Gladstone, “Piling Sand in a Disputed Sea, China Literally Gains Ground,” *New York Times*, April 8, 2015.

¹⁷² 习近平：《弘扬人民友谊，共创美好未来》，在纳扎尔巴耶夫大学的演讲，阿斯塔纳，2013年9月7日 [Xi Jinping, “Promote Friendship Between Our People and Work Together to Build a Bright Future,” speech at Nazarbayev University, Astana, September 7, 2013], <http://politics.people.com.cn/n/2013/0908/c1001-22842914.html>.

a concept under which China would fund construction of ports and other facilities in the maritime regions connecting China with South Asia and Africa.¹⁷³ Together these two initiatives became known as One Belt, One Road, later shortened in the official translation to Belt and Road. In November 2014, China announced the creation of a \$40 billion Silk Road Fund to finance infrastructure projects within the Belt and Road framework.¹⁷⁴

China took other steps to lay the groundwork for a potential alternative financial order. Motivated by its belief that infrastructural financing in Asia was insufficient, as well as by frustration over not having a larger voice in the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, despite being the world's second-largest economy, China established the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). Xi discussed this initiative during his speech in Jakarta in October 2013, and he presided over the bank's official launch in October 2014. The bank's initial capitalization was to be \$50 billion.¹⁷⁵ The United States, concerned about China's establishment of development banks that could rival established Washington-based institutions, lobbied its allies not to join. However, Britain decided in March 2015 to become a founding member of the AIIB, becoming the first G-7 country to do so and drawing a rebuke from the United States.¹⁷⁶ France, Germany, and Italy soon followed Britain's lead.¹⁷⁷ Surprisingly for China, Russia delayed its decision on whether to become a founding member until after these European countries decided to join. Only in early April 2015 did Russia announce its decision to join. One Russian analyst attributed

¹⁷³ 习近平：《携手建设中国-东盟命运共同体》，在印度尼西亚国会的演讲，雅加达，2013年10月3日 [Xi Jinping, "Join Hands to Construct a China-ASEAN Common Community of Fate," speech at the Indonesian Parliament, Jakarta, Oct. 3, 2013], http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/ziliao_674904/zl_674979/dnzt_674981/qtzt/ydyl_675049/zyxw_675051/t1084354.shtml.

¹⁷⁴ "China to establish \$40 billion Silk Road infrastructure fund," *Reuters*, Nov. 8, 2014.

¹⁷⁵ "Three major nations absent as China launches World Bank rival in Asia," *Reuters*, Oct. 24, 2014.

¹⁷⁶ Geoff Dyer, "US attacks UK's 'constant accommodation' with China," *Financial Times*, March 12, 2015.

¹⁷⁷ George Parker, Anne-Sylvaine Chassany, and Geoff Dyer, "Europeans defy US to join China-led development bank," *Financial Times*, March 16, 2015.

Russia's delay to bureaucratic roadblocks and preoccupation with the country's economic difficulties in the wake of Western sanctions and a sharp drop in oil prices.¹⁷⁸ Ultimately, China recognized 57 countries as founding members of the AIIB.¹⁷⁹

Along with the formation of the AIIB, China also committed itself to become the biggest contributor to the newly formed BRICS Development Bank. China, Russia, and the other BRICS countries agreed to form the bank during their 2014 summit in Brazil and officially launched it the following year in Shanghai. The bank's initial capitalization was to be \$50 billion, an amount set to double in the following years.¹⁸⁰

The simultaneous deterioration of U.S.-Russia relations and heightening of great-power tensions between the United States and China led to an increasing strategic convergence between China and Russia. This strategic convergence favored China, however. At a time when diplomatic isolation, Western sanctions, and plunging oil prices put heavy pressure on the Russian economy, China's relative power was increasing, enabling China to negotiate increasingly favorable terms for its relations with Russia.

A Strengthened China-Russia Partnership (2014-2016)

Following the onset of the Ukraine crisis, the strategic convergence of China and Russia accelerated. Both Russian and Chinese analysts argued that the increase in the strategic pressure that both countries faced from the United States drove them toward a closer partnership.¹⁸¹ In the

¹⁷⁸ Alexander Gabuev, "Russia Joins the AIIB...Finally," *The Moscow Times*, April 1, 2015.

¹⁷⁹ Cary Huang, "57 nations approved as founder members of China-led AIIB," *South China Morning Post*, April 15, 2015.

¹⁸⁰ "BRICS countries launch new development bank in Shanghai," *BBC News*, July 21, 2015.

¹⁸¹ Лукин А.В. Поворот России к Азии: миф или реальность // Международная Жизнь. 2014 г. — №7. — 2014 г. С. 90-107 [Alexander Lukin, "Russia's Pivot to Asia: Myth or Reality," *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn'* 2014 (7): 90-107; 冯绍雷: 《乌克兰危机意味着什么?》, 《当代世界》, 2014年第4期 [Feng Shaolei, "What Does the Ukraine Crisis Mean?" *Dangdai Shijie* 2014 (4): 9-11].

view of one Chinese analyst, U.S.-China relations developed smoothly during the first decade of the twenty-first century, but the United States became susceptible to the “Thucydides trap” during the 2010s. The announcement of the U.S. strategy of “rebalancing to Asia,” he argued, caused China’s relationships with the countries involved in its territorial disputes in the South and East China Seas to become increasingly tense. During this same period, the outbreak of the Ukraine conflict caused Russia’s tensions with the West to rise.¹⁸² Under these circumstances, Putin traveled to China in May 2014 seeking China’s diplomatic and economic support. The joint declaration that Putin and Xi Jinping signed during this visit marked a “new depth and breadth of relations and the start of a new era in the relationship.”¹⁸³ Progress in the relationship was apparent at the bilateral, regional, and global levels.

Bilateral level: energy and arms sales

At the bilateral level, China and Russia struck important deals in energy and arms sales. In both cases, Russia’s diplomatic and economic isolation increased China’s bargaining leverage, allowing the Chinese government to conclude these deals on favorable terms. During Putin’s visit to China in May 2014, China and Russia signed a 30-year, \$400 billion gas deal.¹⁸⁴ The two leaders hailed the deal as a sign of their countries’ growing partnership, though in some ways the deal demonstrated the growing power imbalance in China’s favor. For example, news reports on the gas deal suggested that its terms were highly favorable to China. During more than a decade of negotiations, China drove a hard bargain. Even before the Ukraine crisis, Russia faced a narrowing

¹⁸² 李静杰：《中俄战略协作和中美俄“三角关系”，《俄罗斯东欧中亚研究》2014年第4期，第46-47页 [Li Jingjie, “China-Russia Strategic Cooperation and China-U.S.-Russia ‘Triangular Relations’,” *Eluosi Dongou Zhongya Yanjiu* 2014 (4): 46-47].

¹⁸³ Ibid, 43.

¹⁸⁴ For an analysis of this agreement, see Morena Skalamera, “The Sino-Russian Gas Partnership: Explaining the 2014 Breakthrough,” Harvard Kennedy School Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, November 2014.

window of opportunity to enter China's market for natural gas, as China's options expanded rapidly. In 2009, China opened a gas pipeline originating in Turkmenistan and passing through Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, thus breaking Russia's monopoly on Central Asian gas exports. Liquefied natural gas imports were increasingly available from the Middle East, North Africa, and Australia via maritime trade to LNG terminals in China, and potentially transported from LNG terminals in Myanmar to China by way of an overland pipeline. China also possesses potentially large domestic reserves of shale gas. The crisis in Ukraine merely added to the pressure on Russia to strike a deal. The protracted talks that led to the gas deal, like the similarly tortuous negotiations to build a Russia-China oil pipeline spur that opened in 2011, partly reflected Russia's concerns about becoming an energy appendage of China.

During the following years, China-Russia military-technical cooperation revived after many years of declining sales. Russia agreed to sell China some of its most advanced systems, including the S-400 air defense system and 24 Su-35 fighter jets.¹⁸⁵ Russia was willing to sell these weapons to China because they would be more useful against the United States and its Asian allies in a potential scenario of maritime conflict than in a potential invasion of Russia. This would have the benefit, for Russia, of shifting U.S. strategic attention away from Europe and toward the Asia-Pacific theater.¹⁸⁶ Although Russian officials continued to be concerned about potential Chinese copying of Russian weapons designs, they calculated that Russia would maintain its technological

¹⁸⁵ Кашин В. Поставка С-400 в Китай – новый фронт холодной войны? // Московский Центр Карнеги. 19 апреля 2015 г. [Vasily Kashin, "The Delivery of the S-400 to China—A New Front in a Cold War?" Carnegie Moscow Center, April 19, 2015], <http://carnegie.ru/2015/04/19/ru-59828/ik1n>; Кашин В. Зачем Китай купил у России новые истребители? // Московский Центр Карнеги. 2 февраля 2016 г. [Vasily Kashin, "Why Did China Buy New Fighters from Russia?" Carnegie Moscow Center, Feb. 2, 2016] <http://carnegie.ru/commentary/2016/02/02/ru-62640/itfn>.

¹⁸⁶ Author's interview with Vasily Kashin, Center for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies, Moscow, April 24, 2014.

lead for some time to come. For example, by the time China succeeded in producing its own version of the S-400, Russia might have moved on to the next-generation system, the S-500.¹⁸⁷

Regional level: mutual accommodation in Central Asia

At the regional level, China and Russia took important steps to reach an understanding regarding their interests in Central Asia.¹⁸⁸ Xi Jinping's call for the creation of the Silk Road Economic Belt, which came during his speech in Astana in September 2013, aroused some anxiety in Russia. Xi's proposal envisioned Chinese financing of infrastructure throughout Central Asia as a means of connecting China to Europe and the Middle East. Conceivably, therefore, the plan could significantly increase China's influence in Central Asia, which had already grown rapidly. This prospect was potentially worrying for Russia, which ruled over Central Asia for more than a century during tsarist and Soviet times and continued to regard the region as its backyard. Russia's concerns centered on uncertainty about China's intentions and about Russia's place in China's plans. Russian officials refrained from criticizing the proposal publicly, but such concerns did appear in the Russian media.¹⁸⁹

The Russian and Chinese governments, meanwhile, embarked on a diplomatic effort to reach an understanding about the relationship between their Central Asian projects. An important first step came in February 2014, when Xi attended the Winter Olympics in Sochi. During his

¹⁸⁷ Кашин. Поставка С-400 в Китай – новый фронт холодной войны? [Kashin, "The Delivery of the S-400 to China—A New Front in a Cold War?"]

¹⁸⁸ This section draws upon Brian G. Carlson, "Don't Wake Up Evil While It's Quiet: Russia's Response to China's Growing Influence in Central Asia," paper presented at International Studies Association Conference, Hong Kong, June 15-17, 2017.

¹⁸⁹ Панфилова В. "Центральная Азия становится китайской." Независимая Газета. 3 сентября 2013 г. [Viktoria Panfilova, "Central Asia becomes Chinese," *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, Sept. 3, 2013.], http://www.ng.ru/cis/2013-09-03/6_asia.html; Тавровский Ю. "Пекин собирает горы и моря." Независимая Газета. 15 ноября 2013 г. [Yuri Tavrovskii, "Beijing Gathers Mountains and Seas," *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, Nov. 15, 2013], http://www.ng.ru/ideas/2013-11-15/5_china.html

meeting with Putin, the two leaders discussed “joint construction of the Silk Road economic corridor.” By the time of Putin’s visit to China in May of that year, the two sides issued a joint declaration in which Russia expressed its positive appraisal of the Silk Road Economic Belt and of China’s willingness to consider Russia’s interests. These efforts culminated in the joint declaration issued during Xi’s visit to Moscow in May 2015, in which Russia and China pledged to link the Eurasian Economic Union and the Silk Road Economic Belt.¹⁹⁰

Several factors helped to explain Russia’s willingness to accommodate China’s growing influence in Central Asia. One important factor was the value that Russia placed on the overall strategic relationship with China. At a time of diplomatic isolation and economic hardship, Russia could not afford to introduce tension into its relationship with China by aggressively challenging China’s moves in Central Asia.

Within the context of an overall friendly relationship, China sought to reassure Russia about its intentions in Central Asia. In his speech in Astana, Xi articulated China’s “three no’s” in the region: China does not interfere in the region’s domestic politics, does not seek the right of leadership in the region’s affairs, and does not seek a sphere of influence in the region.¹⁹¹ Xi’s message, in the view of Chinese scholars, was intended to offer reassurance not only to the Central Asian countries themselves, but also to Russia.¹⁹² As China pursued its ambitious aims in the Belt

¹⁹⁰ Совместное заявление Российской Федерации и Китайской Народной Республики о сотрудничестве по сопряжению строительства Евразийского экономического союза и Экономического пояса Шелкового пути, 8 мая 2015 г. [Joint declaration of the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China on cooperation in linking the construction of the Eurasian Economic Union and the Silk Road Economic Belt, May 8, 2015], <http://www.kremlin.ru/supplement/4971>

¹⁹¹ 习近平：《弘扬人民友谊，共创美好未来》[Xi Jinping, “Promote Friendship Between Our People and Work Together to Build a Bright Future”].

¹⁹² 赵华胜：《浅评中俄美三大战略在中亚的共处》，《俄罗斯中亚研究》2014年第1期，第104页 [Zhao Huasheng, “A Short Analysis of the Coexistence of the Three Grand Strategies of China, Russia, and the United States in Central Asia,” *Eluosi Zhongya Yanjiu* 2014 (1): 104].

and Road, it recognized the importance of winning Russia's support.¹⁹³ If China were to implement the Silk Road Economic Belt in a way that damaged relations with Russia, wrote Zhao Huasheng, then China would risk "for the sake of a little, losing a lot."¹⁹⁴

Officials and analysts in both countries emphasized that their interests in Central Asia converged to a significant degree. Zhao Huasheng argued that Russia and China shared common interests in support for the security of existing borders, the struggle against terrorism, support for regional stability, the effort to limit U.S. and NATO military presence in the region, and opposition to "color revolutions."¹⁹⁵ This hierarchy of Chinese interests, Alexander Lukin argued, should be acceptable to Russia.¹⁹⁶ This hierarchy also established the preconditions for a potential "division of labor" in which China would serve as an engine of economic development, with special focus on infrastructural investment, while Russia would continue to play the main regional security role through the CSTO.¹⁹⁷ Whether such an arrangement would be viable over the long run remained unclear, however. The possibility loomed that China, as its investments in Central Asia expanded, might increasingly perceive the need to increase its regional security role in order to protect these investments.

Whether or not such a division of labor could serve as the basis for a long-term accommodation of Russian and Chinese interests in Central Asia, the two countries continued to

¹⁹³ 邢广程：《海陆两个丝路：通向世界的战略之梯》，《人民论坛学术前沿》2014年第7期，第93页 [Xing Guangcheng, "Silk Roads on the Land and Sea: Strategic Channels to the World," *Renmin Luntan Xueshu Qianyan* 2014 (7): 93].

¹⁹⁴ 赵华胜：《浅评中俄美三大战略在中亚的共处》，第103页 [Zhao Huasheng, "A Short Analysis of the Coexistence of the Three Grand Strategies of China, Russia, and the United States in Central Asia," 103].

¹⁹⁵ 赵华胜：《中国的中亚外交》，第85页 [Zhao Huasheng, *China's Central Asian Diplomacy*, 85].

¹⁹⁶ Лукин А.В. Идея «экономического пояса Шелкового пути» и евразийская интеграция // *Международная Жизнь*. 2014 г. — №7. — С. 84-98. [Alexander Lukin, "The Idea of the 'Silk Road Economic Belt' and Eurasian Integration," *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn'* 2014 (7): 84-98.]

¹⁹⁷ Китайский глобальный проект для Евразии: постановка задачи (аналитический доклад). М.: Научный эксперт, 2016. С. 7-8. [*The Chinese Global Project for Eurasia: The Formulation of the Task (Analytical Report)*. (Moscow: Nauchniy Ekspert, 2016), 7-8].

confound expectations that they would fall into a heated strategic rivalry in the region. To the extent that a great game was being played in Central Asia, Zhao Huasheng wrote, the players were Russia and the United States, whose geopolitical interests in the region clashed. The lack of a strategic rivalry in Central Asia between China and Russia, he wrote, was a function of both the positive state of their overall relationship and their lack of competing geopolitical interests. Because China was focused on economic development rather than expanding its geopolitical influence in Central Asia, Russia did not perceive China's regional policies as threatening.¹⁹⁸ Influential Russian scholars affiliated with the Valdai Discussion Club endorsed this view, arguing that Russia-China relations in Central Asia could develop a positive-sum character, in contrast to the zero-sum nature of Russia's interactions with the West in this region.¹⁹⁹ In the long term, however, geopolitical influence seemed likely to follow economic influence. If China were to shift to a policy of more overtly seeking an enhanced geopolitical position in Central Asia, then Russia might be forced to adjust its strategy.

Even if Russia were determined to block China's growing economic influence in Central Asia, it had few options for doing so, at least in terms of normal economic competition. Russia was simply unable to compete with China, the world's second-largest economy, in the economic sphere. It could not match China's ability to provide capital for investments in infrastructure, consumer goods for import, or markets for export of hydrocarbons and other goods. Any effort to thwart these advantages would be futile and counterproductive, in the view of many Russian

¹⁹⁸ 赵华胜：《中亚：谁的“大游戏”？》，《新疆师范大学学报》，第37卷第4期，2016年7月 [Zhao Huasheng: "Central Asia: Whose 'Great Game'?" *Xinjiang University Journal* 2016 (4): 89-99].

¹⁹⁹ К Великому Океану-3. Экономический пояс Шелкового пути и приоритеты совместного развития евразийских государств // Международный дискуссионный клуб «Валдай». Июнь 2015 г. С. 13 [*To the Great Ocean-3: The Silk Road Economic Belt and Priorities of Joint Development of Eurasian States* (Moscow: Valdai International Discussion Club, June 2015), 13], <http://ru.valdaiclub.com/files/11300/>

officials and scholars.²⁰⁰ One Russian scholar, resigned to China's growing influence, cited the Russian proverb *Ne budi likho, poka ono tikho* or "Don't wake up evil while it's quiet".²⁰¹

Unable to resist China's growing regional influence, and unwilling to run the risks associated with attempting to do so, Russia increasingly sought to benefit from China's presence. Russian leaders hoped that Chinese leaders would include Russia in their plans to build infrastructural connections to Europe. In particular, they hoped that China's ambitious plans for highways, railroads, and possibly high-speed rail lines would involve connections through Russia.²⁰² Russia had an incentive to take a pragmatic approach, focusing on the concrete gains that it could make from individual projects.²⁰³ It did so, however, as part of an overall strategic calculation that it had more to gain from accommodating China's efforts than from resisting them, especially considering that resistance might be futile anyway.

Global level: increased coordination

China-Russia relations also appeared to gain momentum at the global level.²⁰⁴ During the summer of 2016, Russia joined China in condemning the decision to deploy the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system in South Korea. The United States and South Korea had

²⁰⁰ Китайский глобальный проект для Евразии: постановка задачи (аналитический доклад). М.: Научный эксперт, 2016. С. 7-8. [*The Chinese Global Project for Eurasia: The Formulation of the Task* (Analytical Report). (Moscow: Nauchniy Ekspert, 2016), 7-8].

²⁰¹ Interview with Vladimir Portyakov, Institute of the Far East, Moscow, March 24, 2014. The Russian proverb is "Не буди лихо, пока оно тихо."

²⁰² Новый Шелковый путь и его значение для России / под ред. В.Е. Петровского (отв. Ред.), А.Г. Ларина (сост.), Е.И. Сафрановой. М.: ДеЛи плюс, 2016. С. 59-67 [S.L. Sazonov, "Eurasian Transit-Transport Routes of the PRC" in *The New Silk Road and Its Meaning for Russia*, ed. V.E. Petrovskii, A.G. Larin, E.I. Safronova (Moscow: DeLi Plyus, 2016), 59-67]; Китайский глобальный проект для Евразии: постановка задачи (аналитический доклад). М.: Научный эксперт, 2016. С. 65-66. [*The Chinese Global Project for Eurasia: The Formulation of the Task* (Analytical Report). (Moscow: Nauchniy Ekspert, 2016), 65-66].

²⁰³ Кашин В. Особый пояс—особый путь // Ведомости. 29.5.2017 [Vasily Kashin, "Special Belt—Special Route," *Vedomosti*, May 29, 2017].

²⁰⁴ Stephen Blank, "A Crystallizing Russo-Chinese Alliance," *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 13, no. 145 (September 9, 2016).

discussed the system's potential deployment for years, and talks accelerated after North Korea conducted its fourth nuclear test in January 2016. Formal talks on THAAD deployment began in March, and South Korea announced in early July that it had agreed to the system's deployment. South Korea's announcement followed two years of intense diplomatic efforts by Xi to cultivate ties with South Korea and to weaken the U.S.-South Korea alliance. During a visit to Beijing in June, just prior to South Korea's announcement, Putin joined Xi in denouncing the THAAD system. China argued that the system's capabilities exceeded South Korea's defense needs and that THAAD radar systems would threaten China's nuclear deterrent by enhancing the U.S. ability to track missiles launched from China. Putin compared THAAD to the Aegis Ashore ballistic missile defense system deployed in some NATO countries, suggesting that the United States was attempting to encircle China in the same way that it had, in his view, done to Russia.²⁰⁵ China and Russia also accused the United States of provoking North Korea by holding regular joint military exercises with South Korea.²⁰⁶

Furthermore, while officially maintaining neutrality on China's territorial disputes in the South China Sea, Russia seemed to edge closer to China's position. In July 2016, the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague ruled that China's sweeping claims to control over waters encompassing around 90 percent of the South China Sea were in violation of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), of which China was a signatory. The court ruled that China's construction of artificial islands, as well as its actions that had caused environmental damage, also violated international law. On every significant point, the court sided with the Philippines, which had filed the case in 2013. China rejected the court's ruling, which had no means of enforcement,

²⁰⁵ Jane Perlez, "For China, a Missile Defense System in South Korea Spells a Failed Courtship," *New York Times*, July 8, 2016; Laura Zhou, "China and Russia criticise THAAD missile defense system as destabilising region," *South China Morning Post*, July 8, 2016.

²⁰⁶ Blank, "A Crystallizing Russo-Chinese Alliance."

and vowed not to abide by it.²⁰⁷ A few weeks later, while attending the G-20 conference in Hangzhou, China, in early September, Putin declared his support for China's rejection of the ruling. He also backed China's position that outside powers such as the United States should stay out of these disputes.²⁰⁸ That same month, Russia and China held joint naval exercises in the South China Sea. Through these joint exercises, China appeared determined to signal both its defiance of the court's ruling and its ability to turn to Russia for diplomatic support.²⁰⁹

Analysts in both China and Russia recognized that the two countries' coordination at the global level had intensified following the onset of the Ukraine crisis. They insisted, however, that the relationship continued to fall within the rubric of the "strategic partnership" and had not become an alliance. A think tank report published in 2016, co-authored by Russian and Chinese experts, argued that, in the security sphere, "both states have closely approached the line that separates strategic partnership from military-political alliance," though neither state wished to cross this line.²¹⁰ The prospect of a geopolitically significant China-Russia bloc, possibly one that could be considered a quasi-alliance involving close political coordination, seemed more plausible than it had even a few years earlier.²¹¹ "Both sides can carefully avoid the word 'alliance'," wrote Vasily Kashin, a Russian expert on China, "but this is already something much bigger than 'good-neighborliness' or even 'strategic partnership'."²¹²

²⁰⁷ Jane Perlez, "Tribunal Rejects China's Claims in South China Sea," *New York Times*, July 12, 2016.

²⁰⁸ "Putin: outside interference in South China Sea dispute will only do harm," *Reuters*, September 5, 2016.

²⁰⁹ Chris Buckley, "Russia to Join China in Naval Exercise in Disputed South China Sea," *New York Times*, July 29, 2016.

²¹⁰ Российский Совет по Международным Дела́м, Российско-китайский диалог: модель 2016, no. 25 (2016): 10 [Russia International Affairs Council, *Russia-China Dialogue: Model 2016*, no. 25 (2016), 10].

²¹¹ Carlson, "China-Russia Relations and the Inertia of History," 213-222; "Hostility to the US unites Moscow and Beijing," *Financial Times*, September 13, 2016.

²¹² Кашин В. "Больше, чем партнерство" // Ведомости. 18 августа 2016 г. [Vasily Kashin, "More than Partnership," *Vedomosti*, Aug. 18, 2016].

Some Russian critics argued that Russia's pivot to the East, including its outreach to China, had failed to garner the promised rewards, especially in the economic sphere.²¹³ Other experts acknowledged that results in the economic sphere had been slow in coming. They argued, however, that the expansion of bilateral economic ties between China and Russia would be a long-term process, and any expectation that China could quickly replace the West as a source of foreign direct investment was unrealistic. More importantly, it was a convergence of political interests, not economics, that provided a solid foundation for the China-Russia relationship.²¹⁴

In articles published during 2016 in both English and Chinese, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Fu Ying attempted to clarify the nature of the China-Russia relationship.²¹⁵ She disputed two common outside views. One view was that China-Russia relations were weak, fragile, and likely to deteriorate. The other was that China and Russia were likely to form an anti-Western alliance.²¹⁶

The relationship was unlikely to fray, she argued, because China and Russia had common interests that were likely to endure. Both countries had a strong interest in ensuring that their long border remained a stable, friendly zone. The Sino-Soviet split had created tension and upheaval along the border, posing a big security risk to both countries. China and Russia had every incentive to prevent a recurrence of such tensions. In Central Asia, the two countries had common interests

²¹³ Коростиков М. Недоворот на Восток. Итоги российской политики поворота в Азию противоречивы // Коммерсантъ. 25.12.2015 [M. Korostikov, "Under-pivot to the East: The Results of the Russian Policy of the Pivot to Asia are Contradictory," *Kommersant*, Dec. 25, 2015]; Габуев А. Поворот в никуда. Итоги азиатской политики России в 2015 г. Московский Центр Карнеги. 29.12.2015 [A. Gabuev, "Pivot to Nowhere: Results of Russia's Asia Policies in 2015," Carnegie Moscow Center, Dec. 29, 2015].

²¹⁴ Лукин. Поворот России к Азии: миф или реальность. С. 90-107 [Lukin, "Russia's Pivot to Asia: Myth or Reality," 90-107].

²¹⁵ Fu Ying, "How China Sees Russia: Beijing and Moscow Are Close, but Not Allies," *Foreign Affairs* (January/February 2016); 傅莹: 《中俄关系: 是盟友还是伙伴? 》, 《现代国际关系》, 2016年第4期, 第1-10, 48页 [Fu Ying, "China-Russia Relations: Are They Allies or Partners?", *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* 2016 (4): 1-10, 48].

²¹⁶ 傅莹: 《中俄关系: 是盟友还是伙伴? 》, 第1页 [Fu Ying, "China-Russia Relations: Are They Allies or Partners?", 1].

in preventing “color revolutions” and resisting the “three evil forces” of terrorism, separatism, and extremism. In the economic sphere, the two countries possessed natural complementarities. They had cooperated in the military and energy spheres and could expand this cooperation in a variety of other sectors. Finally, China and Russia held convergent views on many international issues. All of these factors, combined with increasing reserves of mutual trust, were likely to ensure that the relationship would remain strong, the vice foreign minister argued.²¹⁷

At the same time, she argued, China rejected the option of an alliance with Russia. Alliances would be a continuation of bloc politics from the Cold War era and were not suited to present realities, she argued. Alliance politics could stimulate conflict while also constraining the policy options that were open to allied countries. China’s historical experience showed the potential pitfalls of alliances. Historically, China and Russia had formed three alliances: between the Qing Dynasty and tsarist Russia following the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, between Chiang Kai-shek’s Nationalist government and the Soviet Union at the end of World War II, and between the newly formed People’s Republic of China and the Soviet Union during the early Cold War era. Each of these alliances were short-lived, demonstrating that alliances not only failed to guarantee China’s security, but posed significant potential risks.²¹⁸

In Fu Ying’s view, the U.S.-Russia-China triangle had become scalene, that is, with no congruent sides.²¹⁹ A report by U.S. analysts in 2017, picking up on this point, argued that the U.S. position in the triangle had deteriorated, giving China the hinge position.²²⁰ From the perspective of realism, the deterioration of U.S.-Russia relations might be expected to lead to a China-Russia

²¹⁷ Ibid, 5-6.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Ibid, 9.

²²⁰ Robert Sutter, “Foreword,” in Michael S. Chase et. al, *Russia-China Relations: Assessing Common Ground and Strategic Fault Lines*, The National Bureau of Asian Research, NBR Special Report #66, July 2017, v-vii.

alliance. In Fu Ying's view, however, the realities of interdependence in the world politics of the twenty-first century meant that older notions of a triangle, in which two sides would unite and either oppose or ignore the third, were no longer suitable. Under these circumstances, the formation of a China-Russia alliance was not the only unlikely outcome. The G-2 proposal for shared world leadership between the United States and China, proposed in the wake of the financial crisis, never gained traction. Nor was a proposed U.S. strategy of uniting with Russia to balance against China likely to work.²²¹ In January 2017, the Donald J. Trump administration came to office indicating that it was interested in the latter strategy. Given the strong foundations of the current China-Russia relationship, the administration was likely to have difficulty pursuing this strategy. The last quarter century of China-Russia interactions had revealed some inherent limitations in the relationship, but it had also proven more resilient than many had predicted.

²²¹ 傅莹：《中俄关系：是盟友还是伙伴？》，第9页 [Fu Ying, "China-Russia Relations: Are They Allies or Partners?", 9].

Conclusion

This study has argued that both systemic and domestic factors help to explain the development of China-Russia relations during the period from 1991 to 2016. Neoclassical realism offers a framework that allows the incorporation of both sets of factors. This study modifies the neoclassical realist framework to account for crucial variables, including changes in relative power in the international system and the formation of national identities, that exerted important influence on the evolution of the relationship.

The steady improvement of China-Russia relations during this period was in important respects a continuation of the process that began with the normalization of Sino-Soviet relations during the second half of the 1980s. However, the breakup of the Soviet Union, which resulted in a new unipolar structure of the international system, represented a point of discontinuity. It temporarily disrupted the warming of ties between Moscow and Beijing. When this process resumed, the context had changed. The new unipolarity's influence was apparent in several respects.

The breakup of the Soviet Union removed some of the rationale for close U.S.-China relations. Combined with tensions over the Tiananmen Square crackdown, ongoing disagreements over Taiwan, and other issues, this contributed to increased friction in U.S.-China relations during the 1990s. This friction, in turn, encouraged China to cultivate relations with Russia as a partial counterweight to U.S. power. At the same time, Chinese leaders recognized that the U.S. power advantage made confrontation with the United States undesirable. As a result, they largely adhered to Deng Xiaoping's advice to "bide your time and hide your capabilities," pursuing a mostly restrained foreign policy, especially after absorbing the lessons of the Taiwan Strait crisis of March 1996.

Russia was initially unreceptive to China's diplomatic outreach, as the country's new leadership sought to integrate their country into the West. In the following years, however, as Russia endured disappointment in its relations with the United States, President Boris Yeltsin increasingly turned to China. Under domestic political pressure, Yeltsin gradually sought closer ties with China, largely as a way to play the "China card" in relations with the United States. In the new unipolar world, Russia found itself in a greatly weakened position and could not oppose the United States effectively on its own. Russia found itself unable to stop U.S. policies that it opposed, especially NATO expansion. It was natural that Yeltsin would turn to China, an increasingly powerful country that shared many of Russia's misgivings about the new international order. Unipolarity therefore eventually encouraged Russia to respond to China's requests for a closer partnership.

In all of these ways, the unipolar structure of the international system helped to shape the development of China-Russia relations during the post-Soviet era. Throughout the period under study, the U.S. advantage in power encouraged China and Russia to cooperate in order to establish at least a modest counterweight. At the same time, the preponderance of U.S. power limited the two countries' ability to balance the United States, effectively ruling out the possibility of an alliance. In any case, neither country perceived a direct threat to their security from the United States, giving them little incentive to pursue such an arrangement.

Despite these constants in the China-Russia relationship, the international environment was not static. Changes in relative power enabled adjustments in both country's foreign policies, which in turn held implications for their own bilateral relationship. Throughout this period, China maintained high levels of economic growth, paving the way for its rise to power. Russia, meanwhile, began to recover its footing during the first decade of the twenty-first century, after

suffering a severe decline in power during the 1990s. By 2008, important changes in relative power were occurring, which can be expressed in terms of Charles Doran's power cycle theory. China, after experiencing decades of accelerating growth in relative power, was approaching a point at which its growth would begin to slow. Russia was attempting to cross the lower turning point on its power cycle and enter a period of accelerating growth, though structural weaknesses in its economy cast doubt on its long-term prospects. The United States, whose relative power had been in a long but steady decline since the late 1960s, suddenly appeared weaker than at any point in the post-Cold War era, first because of its inconclusive wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and later because of the global financial crisis.

As a result of these changes in relative power, both countries sought to claim greater foreign policy roles, as power cycle theory would expect. Both became increasingly assertive in their foreign policies. Russian President Vladimir Putin harshly denounced the United States in a speech in Munich in 2007. The following year, Russia waged a brief and decisive war in Georgia, signaling that it would tolerate no further expansion of Euro-Atlantic institutions into former Soviet territory. In the years following the financial crisis, China advanced its territorial claims in the South and East China Seas more assertively than in the recent past. Under the leadership of President Xi Jinping, who assumed power in late 2012 and early 2013, China continued this new regional assertiveness and also began to lay the institutional groundwork for a greater role in the international system in the future.

The manner in which both countries pursued enhanced foreign policy roles, however, owed much to their national identities, with important implications for their own bilateral relationship. The governing regimes in both countries perceived U.S. efforts to promote democracy, human rights, and other liberal norms as threats to their own domestic governance. They found common

ground, therefore, in opposing U.S. claims to leadership of an international community proclaiming universal validity for liberal values. Both countries bristled at U.S. criticism of their domestic governance, opposed the “color revolutions” and the Arab Spring, and took measures to ensure that U.S. influence would not undermine the security of their own domestic regimes. The leadership of both countries viewed the United States principally as a threat to their own regimes’ security, rather than as a physical threat to their countries’ national security.

China and Russia also frequently declared their support for multipolarity. They asserted that the world was already becoming multipolarity, and that this trend would naturally limit U.S. power. Their declarations of support for multipolarity concealed some differences in outlook. Russia sought multipolarity because it wanted to avoid marginalization on the international scene. Ideally, it would establish itself as a swing power between the United States and China in a tripolar world. As China grew increasingly powerful, however, this prospect seemed increasingly elusive. Chinese leaders declared their support for multipolarity, hoping that the existence of other power centers would dilute U.S. pressure on their own country. Yet they increasingly prepared for the potential formation of a bipolar world, with the United States and China as the two superpowers.

For both countries, multipolarity also meant a world in which they would establish spheres of influence in their own regions. This outlook also reflected their own convergent national identities. The establishment of regional spheres of influence would be merely the extension of their own authoritarian domestic governance into adjoining regions. The attempt to establish regional spheres of influence gathered momentum in both countries starting around 2008. Such attempts threatened to bring both countries into conflict with the United States, and were also inimical to principles of a liberal international order. As a result, both countries proceeded cautiously, engaging in low-level probing to test U.S. power and commitment. The two countries

maintained official neutrality on each other's regional disputes, but at times they provided a measure of diplomatic support. The existence of tensions in both countries' relations with the United States, as long as these remained under control, stretched U.S. resources and provided both countries with some strategic room for maneuver in their own regions.

Convergent national identities were a major factor in strengthening the China-Russia relationship. As China grew increasingly powerful relative to Russia, the two countries' national interests threatened to diverge. China's growing power posed a potential threat to Russia's sparsely populated and underdeveloped regions of Siberia and the Russian Far East. Russia's efforts to strengthen ties with some of China's rivals in Asia, including Japan, Vietnam, and India, were a source of possible tension. Perhaps most strikingly, China's growing influence in Central Asia, which the Belt and Road Initiative underscored, threatened a clash between Chinese and Russian interests in Central Asia. Despite these potential conflicts of national interests, the two countries consistently found ways to manage their differences. They set aside these possible disputes in favor of cooperation to minimize the perceived threat that the United States posed to their national identities.

China-Russia cooperation during the period from 1991 to 2016 achieved important results, but also remained limited in important respects. By resolving their border dispute and removing the mutual security threat that had existed during the Cold War, both countries greatly enhanced their national security. They would have had strong incentives to achieve this progress even in the absence of unipolarity and concerns about the United States. However, these agreements were also a necessary prerequisite to increased cooperation on the international stage. The two countries also reaped important material benefits from their cooperation. China gained access to Russian weapons and military technology, making a significant contribution to its military modernization.

After protracted negotiations, China also enhanced its energy security by tapping into Russian oil and gas resources. Russia reaped its own economic awards from these deals. In the case of military-technical cooperation, China's purchases of Russian weapons played an important role in sustaining Russia's domestic defense industry during a difficult stage following the breakup of the Soviet Union.

Higher levels of cooperation proved difficult to achieve, however. China and Russia expressed opposition to the United States on a series of issues, including plans for missile defense, the Kosovo war, the war in Iraq, and efforts to increase pressure on Iran and North Korea over their nuclear weapons programs. Some scholars argued that these efforts constituted "soft balancing." In several cases, notably on missile defense, Kosovo, and Iraq, China and Russia were unable to influence U.S. policy. Their cooperation imposed some constraints on the United States in its dealings with Iran and North Korea. In both cases, however, the United States faced serious obstacles to the imposition of effective pressure, military or otherwise, that were intrinsic to the situation itself and separate from the influence exerted by cooperation between China and Russia.

Triangular diplomacy also failed, for the most part, to achieve significant results. Russia's efforts to play the "China card" were largely unsuccessful, mostly because of Russia's own weakness. China claimed the former U.S. pivot position in the triangle, but attempts to exploit its relations with Russia to gain leverage in relations with the United States were not a major part of its strategy. For China, the benefits of holding the pivot position chiefly consisted in its ability to reap the gains of relations with Russia, especially the establishment of a secure strategic rear and the acquisition of weapons and energy resources, without causing serious damage in relations with the United States. The highest potential form of cooperation, namely the formation of a military-alliance, remained off the agenda during this period, both because neither country perceived the

United States as a direct threat to its national security and because even such an alliance would have failed to produce the aggregate capability needed to balance U.S. power effectively.

Despite its limitations, the post-Soviet China-Russia relationship has proven more resilient than many analysts anticipated. Although the prospects for the formation of a military-political alliance remain remote, the relationship probably has sufficiently firm foundations to remain relatively stable for the near future. For now, the two states share enough commonality in their national identities to ensure continued partnership. Much of this commonality centers on overlap in their views of the United States. Although neither country desires a rupture in this relationship, the leadership of both countries views the United States as both a potential threat to their domestic governance and an obstacle to their international ambitions. As long as these points remain major concerns for both countries, they are likely to maintain or incrementally increase their current levels of cooperation at the international level.

If the current arrangement were to break down, a change in Russia's perception of China's rise would be the most likely cause. To date, Russian leaders have set aside their fears about the implications of China's growing power for the sake of maintaining good relations. This could change if Russian leaders begin to view China's rise as a much more imminent threat than they now perceive it. China could eventually pose a threat to the Russian Far East or to Russian interests in Central Asia. If so, Russia could be forced to recalibrate its strategy, possibly by seeking to improve relations with the West as a counterbalance against Chinese ambitions. China, however, would have strong incentives to avoid such an outcome. Chinese leaders perceive that their growing power could eventually give rise to counterbalancing efforts by neighboring states. Such tendencies are already visible in increased quadrilateral coordination among the United States, India, Japan, and Australia. If China were to pursue its ambitions in ways that antagonized Russia,

then China could lose its secure strategic rear and risk encirclement. The rise of a fiercely nationalistic Chinese leadership could give rise to such a scenario. In the absence of a Chinese leadership willing to take such risks, however, China and Russia will continue to have strong incentives to maintain their strategic partnership.

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[“Russia and China as Subjects of the World Politics”] // Обозреватель. 1994 г. — № 19-20.
С. 57-59 [*Obozrevatel'* 1994 (19-20): 57-59].

List of Interviews

Interviews in China

Cai Jiahe, Hopkins-Nanjing Center, Nanjing, Nov. 20, 2014

Da Wei, China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR), Beijing, April 24, 2015

Feng Shaolei, East China Normal University, Shanghai, Feb. 12, 2015

Feng Yujun, China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR), Beijing, June 10, 2015

Guan Guihai, Peking University, Beijing, May 7, 2015

Guo Li, Heilongjiang University, Harbin, June 16, 2015

Jiang Yi, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Center for Russian, East European, and Central Asian Studies, Beijing, May 26, 2015

Li Bo, University of International Relations, Beijing, May 22, 2015

Li Chuanxun, Heilongjiang University, Harbin,

Li Lifan, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, Shanghai, March 12, 2015

Li Qi, Shaanxi Normal University, Xi'an, July 6, 2015

Li Xin, Shanghai Institutes for International Studies (SIIS), Shanghai, Jan. 28, 2015

Liu Qingcai, Jilin University, Changchun, June 18, 2015

Meng Nan, Xinjiang University, Urumqi, July 22, 2015

Pan Guang, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, Shanghai, Feb. 4, 2015

Qi Wenhai, Heilongjiang University, Harbin, June 16, 2015

Qiang Xiaoyun, Shanghai Institutes for International Studies (SIIS), Shanghai, Jan. 28, 2015

Shen Dingli, Fudan University, Shanghai, March 6, 2015

Shi Lan, Xinjiang Academy of Social Sciences, Urumqi, July 22, 2015

Shi Ze, China Institute of International Studies (CIIS), Beijing, June 19, 2015

Tang Shiping, Fudan University, Shanghai, Feb. 12, 2015

Wang Jisi, Peking University, conversation, Beijing, June 9, 2015

Wu Dahui, Tsinghua University, Beijing, June 29, 2015

Wu Xinbo, Fudan University, Shanghai, March 6, 2015

Xing Guangcheng, Institute of Chinese Borderland Studies, Beijing, May 27, 2015

Xue Fuqi, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Center for Russian, East European, and Central Asian Studies, Beijing, June 9, 2015

Yan Xuetong, Tsinghua University, conversation at the University of Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland, March 6, 2018

Yang Shu, Lanzhou University, Lanzhou, Aug. 22, 2014 and July 9, 2015

Zhang Xin, East China Normal University, Shanghai, Jan. 19, 2015

Zhao Huasheng, Fudan University, Shanghai, Nov. 11, 2014 and March 6, 2015

Interviews in Russia

Alexei Arbatov, Carnegie Moscow Center, Moscow, June 2, 2016

Alexander Goryunov, Russian Academy of Sciences, Far Eastern Branch, Institute for Economic Research, Khabarovsk, June 24, 2014

Vasily Kashin, Center for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies, Moscow, April 24, 2014

Alexander Khramchikhin, Institute for Political and Military Analysis, Moscow, May 22, 2014

Alexander Larin, Institute of the Far East, Moscow, May 30, 2016

Viktor Larin, Russian Academy of Sciences, Far Eastern Branch, Vladivostok, June 27, 2014

Alexander Lukin, Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Moscow, June 3, 2014

Artyom Lukin, Far Eastern Federal University, Vladivostok, June 27, 2014

Sergey Luzyanin, Institute of the Far East, Moscow, May 19, 2014

Yuliya Nikitina, Moscow State Institute for International Relations (MGIMO), Moscow, June 11, 2014

Vladimir Portyakov, Institute of the Far East, Moscow, March 24, 2014

Lilia Shevtsova, Carnegie Moscow Center, Moscow, Jan. 13, 2014

Mikhail Titarenko, Institute of the Far East, Moscow, March 6, 2014

Dmitri Trenin, Carnegie Moscow Center, Moscow, April 18, 2014

Tamara Troyakova, Far Eastern Federal University, Vladivostok, June 27, 2014

Alexei Voskresenskii, Moscow State Institute for International Relations (MGIMO), Moscow, Jan. 24, 2014

Interviews in Kazakhstan

Sanat Kushkumbayev, Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies, Almaty, Sept. 30, 2006 and Astana, July 29, 2015

Askar Nursha, Institute of World Politics and Economics, Almaty, Aug. 10, 2015

Konstantin L. Syroezhkin, Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies, Almaty, Aug. 4, 2015

Author's Biography and *Curriculum Vitae*

Brian G. Carlson earned his Ph.D. from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) in 2018. He previously earned his master's degree from SAIS and his bachelor's degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He lived in China for five years and in Russia for two years. He also spent one year in Kazakhstan as a Fulbright Graduate Fellow. He speaks both Chinese and Russian. At the time of his dissertation defense, he was a Trans-Atlantic Post-Doctoral Fellow in International Relations and Security (TAPIR) working at the Center for Security Studies in Zurich. For his subsequent rotations in the TAPIR program, he was scheduled to work at Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP) in Berlin starting in June 2018, followed by a rotation at RAND in Washington, D.C. starting in February 2019.

His *curriculum vitae* begins on the next page.

Brian G. Carlson

Curriculum Vitae

EDUCATION

Johns Hopkins University **Washington, D.C.**
School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) **May 2018**

Ph.D. Candidate, International Relations

- Dissertation: “Seeking Leverage: China-Russia Relations in World Politics, 1991-2016”
- Passed dissertation defense with distinction (April 2018)
- Taught undergraduate course on China-Russia relations at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, January 2017 (8 lectures)

Johns Hopkins University-Nanjing University **Nanjing, China**
Center for Chinese and American Studies **June 2009**
Graduate Certificate, Chinese Studies

Johns Hopkins University **Washington, D.C.**
School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) **May 2008**

Master of Arts, International Relations & International Economics

- American Foreign Policy, Russian and Eurasian Studies, International Economics
- Editor-in-Chief, *SAIS Review of International Affairs* (2005-2006)
- Robert E. Osgood Memorial Fellowship, American Foreign Policy
- Studied at SAIS from 2004-2006, completed all coursework in 2006
- Remained technically enrolled until May 2008 under terms of Boren Fellowship

University of Nebraska-Lincoln **Lincoln, Neb.**
Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Journalism **December 2000**

- Majors: Political Science, International Affairs, News-Editorial
- Phi Beta Kappa
- Graduate of Honors Program

EXPERIENCE

RAND **Washington, D.C.**
Summer Associate **June-September 2017**

Pacific Epoch **Shanghai**
Editor, *The China Report* (macroeconomic research) **April 2010-April 2011**

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute **Beijing**
Research assistant, China and Global Security **September 2009-February 2010**

Eurasia Group **Washington, D.C.**
Intern, conducted research on Russia **March-July 2006**

Caspian Business News **Baku, Azerbaijan**
Reporter and Editor **June-August 2005**

Lincoln Journal Star **Lincoln, Neb.**
Reporter **August 2001-June 2003**

Brian G. Carlson

Curriculum Vitae

FELLOWSHIPS

TAPIR

Trans-Atlantic Post-Doc Fellowship in International Relations
and Security

Center for Security Studies, ETH (October 2017-May 2018)

Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (June 2018-February 2019)

RAND (February-September 2019)

**Zurich, Berlin, Washington
2017-2019**

Zurich

Berlin

Washington, D.C.

George L. Abernethy Fellow

SAIS Europe

Bologna, Italy

2015-2016

Fulbright-Hays

Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Fellowship

Shanghai and Beijing

2014-2015

American Councils

Title VIII Combined Research and Language Training Program

Moscow

2013-2014

David Boren National Security Education Program (NSEP)

Peking University, Chinese language studies

Beijing

2007-2008

Fulbright Graduate Fellowship

Conducted research on Kazakhstan's foreign policy

Almaty, Kazakhstan

2006-2007

Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Fellowship

Moscow State Institute for International Relations (MGIMO)

Moscow

2003-2004

PUBLICATIONS

- “Room for Maneuver: China and Russia Strengthen Their Relations,” in *Strategic Trends 2018* (Zurich: Center for Security Studies, ETH Zurich, 2018).
- “The China Challenge Calls for US Leadership,” *Policy Perspectives*, Vol. 5/6 (November 2017), Center for Security Studies, ETH Zurich.
- “Alternative Scenarios: China-Russia Relations over the Next Few Years: Negative Scenarios I and II,” *The Asian Forum* (Aug. 25 and Sept. 22, 2016).
- “China-Russia Relations and the Inertia of History” (Review Essay), *Survival*, Vol. 58, No. 3 (June/July 2016), 213-222.
- “Don’t wake up evil while it’s quiet, nor turn pale at the mention of a tiger: Russian and Chinese scholars debate their countries’ relations in Central Asia,” *China in Central Asia*, June 3, 2015.
- “Russia-China Gas Deal a Sign of Russian Weakness, Not New Alliance,” The Foreign Policy Institute, Johns Hopkins SAIS, June 4, 2014.
- “Waving the Banner of Independence: Kazakhstan’s Relations with Russia, China, and the United States,” *Yale Journal of International Affairs*, Winter/Spring 2008.
- “The Limits of Sino-Russian Strategic Partnership in Central Asia,” *Journal of Public and International Affairs*, Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University, Spring 2007, Vol. 18.

Brian G. Carlson

Curriculum Vitae

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- “Explaining the Resurgence of Russian Arms Sales to China.” International Studies Association, San Francisco, April 4-7, 2018.
- “Don’t Wake Up Evil While It’s Quiet: Russia’s Response to China’s Growing Influence in Central Asia.” International Studies Association, Hong Kong, June 15-17, 2017.
- “The Eurasian Energy Prize: China-Russia Cooperation and Competition in Oil and Gas.” Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, April 13, 2013.
- “The Shanghai Cooperation Organization's Response to Three Regional Security Crises.” University of Kansas, Center for Russian, East European & Eurasian Studies, Lawrence, Kansas, April 10, 2013.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Languages:

- Russian (highly proficient)
- Chinese (highly proficient, passed HSK 6 in May 2015)
- Italian (intermediate)
- Spanish (intermediate)
- Persian (low intermediate)
- German (beginner)

Honors:

- First Place, William Randolph Hearst Foundation National Writing Championship (2001)
- Runner-up, Leonard Marks Foundation Essay Contest on U.S. foreign policy (2009)